A Complete Story by Hamlin Garland on Page 16.

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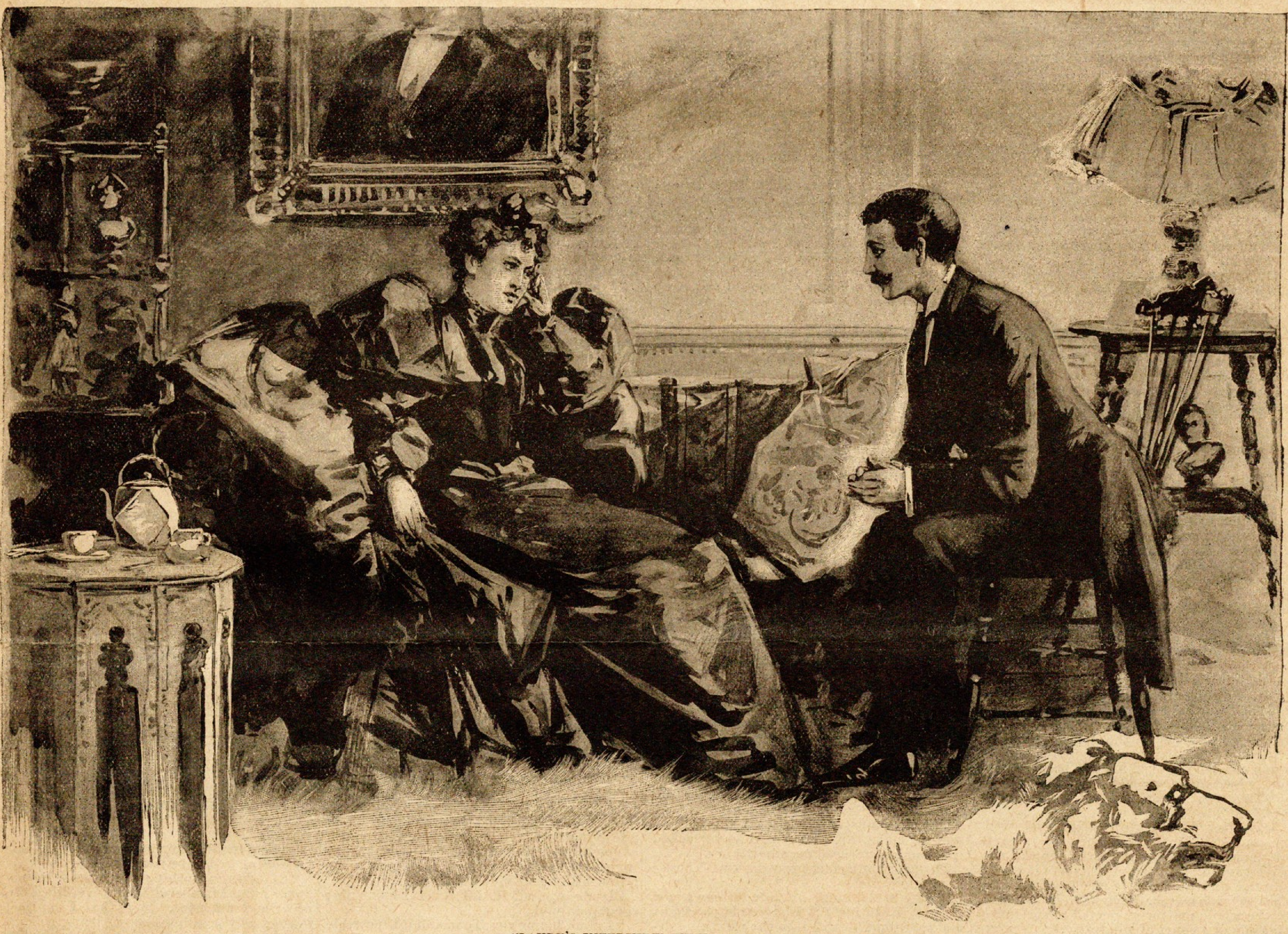

CLAUDE'S INTERVIEW WITH HALLIE.

THE DARK STRANGER.*

BY JOHN R. MUSICK,

Author of "The Columbian Historical Novels," "Mysterious Mr. Howard," etc.

Contents of this Number:

PAGE
The Dark Stranger. Illustrated. (1st installment.) JOHN R. MUSICK. 1
The Dancer's Shadow: A Poem. ETHEL LYNN. 3
Willful Penelope. (8th installment.) EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS. 4
Darby, the Bear-Hunter of Alaska. (9th installment.) SEWARD W. HOPKINS. 5
Mysterious Mr. Howard. (16th installment.) JOHN R. MUSICK. 7
The House is Changed: A Poem. ADA ROWENA CARNAHAN. 8
One Dash—Horses. STEPHEN CRANE. 8
Editorials, etc. 10
Husband and Wife Reading Together: A Poem. WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE. 10
Public Speaking. 10
In Search of Gold. Illustrated. (4th installment.) COLIN MIDDLETON. 11
A Fortunate Fire-Hunt. Illustrated. T. C. HARBAUGH. 13
Children All Over the World.—Correspondence.—Science. 14
Woman's World. 14
A Girl From Washington. HAMLIN GARLAND. 16
The Czar Nicholas. SOPHIE FRIEDLAND. 18

CHAPTER I.

THE QUARREL.

NEARLY half a century ago, Mr. Robert Morton was one of the best-known merchants in New York. He was not only well known in New York City, but also in the West Indies, Central America and California, with which countries he carried on an extensive trade. Mr. Morton was of a good family, rich, proud and arrogant. He was a genuine type of the aristocratic gentleman of the past. He would not stoop to a dishonorable act for the world. Though a shrewd business man who did not ask or give quarter in a trade, he was never guilty of the many tricks and deceptions often resorted to by some of the so-called business men of the present.

Mr. Morton made frequent trips to the West Indies, and took one journey to California. This was the fatal journey of his life, as we shall see. In those days the Vanderbilt Transportation Company transferred its passengers across Nicaragua, and by a line of ocean steamers on the Pacific side to San Francisco.

It was on his return from California that Mr. Morton met with an adventure destined to cloud the remainder of his life. Mr. Morton was a childless widower of fifty-five. His only relative and heir was Claude Morton, the son of his deceased brother. Claude had been taken into the business house of his uncle as soon as he left college, for it was essential that the heir to that vast fortune should understand the management of it. Soon after Claude entered his uncle's counting-house he met a beautiful girl, named Hallie Tyler. To say he fell in love with Hallie at first sight would express it too tamely. He was madly in love with Hallie from the hour he first set eyes on her.

Hallie was living with an aunt in the city. Her mother was dead, and her father, once a well-to-do merchant in the city, having failed, had gone to California to recuperate his health and fortune. This was in the palmy days of the California gold mining, when so many were reported as making fortunes, and he hoped to be one of the lucky number.

George Tyler was an acquaintance of Mr. Robert Morton and at one time his friend. But that was in his prosperous days. Mr. Morton, who had never known failure himself, considered it an almost unpardonable sin not to succeed. When Mr. George Tyler failed and went to California, seven or eight years before our story opens, Mr. Morton regarded his failure as resulting from either culpable negligence, dishonesty or lack of capacity—offenses, any one of which ought to ostracize him from good society.

He was by no means pleased with his nephew's attachment to the daughter of the bankrupt. She was penniless and could bring nothing but an empty name to her husband. That name, it is true, was an honorable one, and she was a beautiful young lady, but the house would receive no advantage from the alliance. But when news came from California that Mr. Tyler had at last struck "paying dirt," and was unearthing a fortune, Mr. Morton did not forbid his nephew proposing to the daughter of his

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former friend, but urged him to wait until he should return from his contemplated trip to California. He resolved to investigate the truth of Tyler's reputed wealth, and, if true, then give his consent to his nephew's marriage with Hallie.

When Mr. Morton set out for California, the young folks, left to themselves, did not await his investigation, but made love in the natural way, which knows no such restraint as differences in fortune or station. Claude proposed and was accepted, but as Hallie's father was to come back with Mr. Morton, they decided to await their return before fixing the day for their marriage.

It was on their return that the sad and terrible event before alluded to happened. The story of Mr. Tyler's success proved true. He had amassed a large fortune, and with it started back in company with Mr. Morton and others. They reached San Juan del Sur, by the steamer *Orizaba*, and with a very slender guard started across the country to Greytown. On the route they were attacked by robbers. Mr. Tyler was killed and robbed and Mr. Morton escaped, boarded the *North Star* at Greytown and sailed for New York.

The blow fell heavily on poor Hallie Tyler. She was only nine years of age when her father went to California. After seven years of toil he was returning home wealthy to bless her and make her happy; but instead of father and wealth, she received only meager news of his death and the loss of fortune. She was so heart-broken that she locked herself in her room and for days refused to see any one. Mr. Morton was so reticent about the robbery and murder that nothing but his good name and unimpeachable character kept him from falling under suspicion.

He never spoke freely with any one save his legal adviser, Mr. John W. Howells. Mr. Howells was even more circumspect and close-mouthed than his wealthy client. One might as well try to get a secret from a millstone as from Mr. Howells.

On his arrival in New York, Mr. Morton went to his residence and wrote two brief notes, one to his nephew and one to Hallie, in which he stated in the briefest, coldest manner possible that Mr. Tyler had been robbed and killed in Nicaragua, and that he had barely escaped with his life. That was all. No details were given. The grief-stricken daughter sent a request to the merchant to grant her an interview, but he declined to do so.

The newspapers got hold of the story, and sent reporters to worm some information from him, but Mr. Morton was not to be seen. He saw no one save Mr. Howells, who was also silent. His nephew, sharing the grief of his sweetheart, and angered by the many strange whispers Dame Rumor had started, determined to learn something from his uncle or Mr. Howells. Mr. Morton refused to say more than he had already said, and the young man demanded a fuller explanation from the lawyer.

Mr. Howells was very tall and slender; his head was bald on the top, and his thin face smooth-shaven, save very short side-whiskers just below the ears. When accosted on the great, broad steps in front of the house, he removed his tall, bell-crowned hat, wiped his face, and remarked:

"This case is not ready for the public yet."

Day after day and week after week went by, and still Mr. Morton, the sole survivor of the party, was dumb on the subject, notwithstanding that the newspapers began to surmise and theorize. Some boldly hinted that the rich merchant ought to be arrested, or the whole matter subjected to the investigation of a court of admiralty.

No one was more unmoved by these insinuations than Mr. Morton. He shut himself closer in his room, and, if possible, was more inaccessible than ever.

This was maddening to his nephew, whose ears were constantly burning with the insinuations against his uncle. Claude called frequently to see Hallie and offer consolation to her, but, on one pretext or another, she declined to see him, until an awful suspicion entered his mind. Perhaps these stories had changed her love for him.

"No, no. Surely Hallie cannot believe anything so absurd," he declared.

Next day his uncle went to his office, as usual, refusing to discuss the matter. A tall, dark-complexioned man, with a slightly foreign accent, presented himself at the business-house, and gave his name as Monsieur Pierre Le Clerc, from Martinique, West Indies, who wished to see the head of the firm.

"Mr. Morton is in his private office," said the chief clerk, to whom the stranger applied, "but I very much doubt if he will see you. He sees no one of late."

"I beg pardon, but Monsieur will see me," answered the dark stranger, with all the politeness of a Frenchman.

Claude, who was at work at his desk, raised his head and gave the Frenchman a critical scrutiny. He was tall, had a high, receding forehead, rather small, snake-like eyes, prominent ears, a sallow complexion, with heavy mustache and goatee, both black as midnight. There was something about the man to excite more than a passing glance. Meet him on the street, and one would turn to take a second look, and after even a third look, the beholder could not say that he was favorably impressed with the polite stranger.

"The Monsieur will not refuse to see me."

The assurance with which the stranger spoke almost carried conviction to the skeptical clerk, who knew that Mr. Morton received no one. But when the name Pierre Le Clerc, Martinique, West Indies, was taken to Mr. Morton, he politely excused himself, claimed that he was busy and could see no one.

On receiving this answer, Monsieur Le Clerc smiled assuringly and called for paper and envelope. With his pencil he hastily wrote a note, and, sealing it, addressed it to Mr. Morton, saying:

"Give this to Monsieur, and he will see me."

There was a triumphant smile on his face as he spoke which seemed to indicate that he held a winning card. The boy who delivered the note returned in a few moments, saying to the dark stranger:

"Walk into Mr. Morton's private office, sir."

The gentleman from Martinique rose, with a knowing smile which displayed his immaculately white teeth, bowed triumphantly to the army of astounded clerks, and, with an air of authority, walked into the private office of the great merchant, and the door closed.

No one was more astonished at this than Claude. How could this stranger gain an interview with his uncle when every one else had been refused?

Old Bob, the chief clerk, shook his head, and said:

"It's curious!"

"Did you ever see him before, Bob?" Claude asked.

"No. He's a West India Frenchman; one can see that. Black enough to be a negro."

Minutes passed, and the door opening into Mr. Morton's private office was not opened. Minutes became hours, and still the dark stranger and the merchant were closeted. At last, when half the employees in the great establishment had gone to lunch, and the other half were preparing to follow their example, that door opened and Monsieur Le Clerc came out. His face wore the same expression of triumph. With a haughty air he passed from the building without even looking at the employees.

Half an hour later Mr. Morton came forth to give his usual instructions to the heads of departments, and returning to his private office, again closed and locked the door.

Claude Morton, to whom his uncle's conduct was growing more and more exasperating, determined to know something of this new mystery.

When evening came, Mr. Morton was driven in his carriage to his elegant uptown residence, where he lived alone with his servants. He had dined and retired to his study, when the door-bell rang, and the servant who answered it saw the merchant's nephew.

"Is Uncle Robert in his study?" he asked.

"Yes, but—"

"Never mind. I must see him."

"I had better announce you—"

"No, I will announce myself," and he passed the servant and hurried up to his uncle's study. The door was closed, but not locked, and he pushed it open and entered unannounced. The merchant was examining some papers, which he quickly put out of sight on the entrance of his nephew.

"What does this unceremonious and unannounced visit mean?" he angrily demanded.

"Uncle, I must talk with you, and if I had sent my name up, you would have locked the door and refused me admittance."

The merchant's face grew dark with anger as he answered:

"Why in the name of thunder can't you take my word for it? I have told the facts, and I will not now go into the sickening details of that affair."

"You do not understand, uncle, how this silence, this refusal of a detailed explanation, is injuring you. People have begun to talk—"

"Let their infernal tongues wag. Let the newspapers print what they wish about me; until the proper time comes I will say no more."

"But you do not understand, and how all this injures me. Think! It was Hallie's father who was murdered. She ought to know all. Was there not a last message to her—"

"I have written all to her, and I will do no more—"

"She refuses to see me, and—and I fear that she suspects what others do."

"Then, by heaven, you should refuse to see her!" cried the merchant, angrily. "If my honorable name and a quarter of a century of business are not guarantee for my statements, let 'em surmise; and as for your love-making with this young woman, that is at an end."

Claude was as spirited as his uncle, and one sharp retort brought on another, until the two were using high words, when the door noiselessly opened and the tall, stately form of Mr. Howells appeared on the threshold, and fixed his sharp eyes on the angry nephew.

Claude was silenced, and quickly retired from the house, burning with rage and covered with confusion.

CHAPTER II.

AN UNKNOWN MISCHIEF-MAKER.

In fits of passion more is said than is intended. Hot temper begets angry words, for which the speaker may be sorry the next moment, though pride may prevent his acknowledging his error. Claude loved his uncle, and his uncle loved him, in his way, and both were ashamed of their displays of temper as soon as the flurry was over.

Claude was walking hurriedly away from his uncle's house, when he almost ran against some one.

"Beg pardon," he began.

"Hello, Claude Morton! Say, what is wrong, my fine fellow?" asked a deep, coarse voice, and a strong hand grasped his arm.

The speaker was a young man of about his own age, named Ambrose Fletcher. They had been college mates, but never intimate friends. Fletcher was of a cold, cynical, unscrupulous nature, but what had prevented their being close friends was the fact that they were rivals for the hand of pretty Hallie Tyler. If Fletcher lacked many virtues, he possessed to a wonderful degree perseverance. He did not despair of ultimately winning Hallie's hand, even when he had learned that she was betrothed to Claude Morton. Though rivals, Fletcher and Claude kept up a social acquaintance.

"Say, my boy, what is wrong?" asked Fletcher.

Still smarting under his uncle's taunts and threats, Claude Morton turned loose his unbridled wrath in a torrent against his uncle, whom he regarded as a barrier between himself and Hallie.

"Hold, Claude; don't you know you are saying terrible things of your uncle?" said Fletcher.

"They are true, and he shall tyrannize over me no longer! I am a free man, and will be one!"

"By the way, there is a new rumor afloat," Fletcher slyly remarked. "There is a certain mysterious stranger in this secret. What has he to do with it?"

"I don't know."

"The papers are ventilating the affair."

"Let them ventilate. Although my uncle is stubborn and unreasonably reticent in this matter, he is honorable. When he is ready to give the particulars, the public will have them."

"Have you seen this stranger—this Monsieur Le Clerc?"

"Yes; when he called at the counting-house."

"They say he is on to your uncle's secret."

Thus they talked as they walked several blocks together, Claude censuring his uncle one moment and defending him the next. He felt relieved when he parted from Ambrose, for there was something unpleasant about his prying questions. When rid of Fletcher, Claude went to his club, where he met another college mate of quite a different stamp. His name was Tom Coleman. Tom was poor in purse, but rich in good humor, and just the sort of a friend to stick to one through thick and thin.

"Hello, Claude! Come here," cried Tom. "Come and sit by me. I was just wishing you would come, for I have something to tell you."

"What is it, Tom?"

"I am going to leave New York."

"Where are you going?"

"To California."

Opening his eyes very wide, Claude gave his friend a short stare, and asked:

"Tom, are you serious?"

"Never was more so. Why not? California is a great place for a poor young fellow like me. Many go there and get rich in a few years. I've got health and strength, a good appetite and a clear conscience, but little else. I have no rich uncle to leave me a few millions at his death."

Claude was silent for several moments; then answered:

"I don't blame you, Tom, and it is possible I may go with you."

"You? Why, you are mad to think of it. You have too many ties that bind you here. There is your uncle and the colossal business, and, last but not least, your sweetheart."

With his eyes on the floor, Claude answered:

"Tom, there is something wrong."

"Something wrong! What can it be?"

"You are my friend, and I would never keep a secret from you if I dared tell it; but there is a mystery in this which I do not understand myself. You have heard of my uncle's return?"

"Yes."

"He still declines to make any explanations about the death of Mr. Tyler."

"Why?"

"There is the mystery. Uncle always was a close man. In this he is more silent than in anything else. His lawyer alone knows what he thinks. His silence is affecting me."

"How?"

"Hallie has refused to see me three successive evenings."

"It may be on account of grief for her father, Claude. I know she is too sensible a girl to blame either you or your uncle in any way. Try her again. Perhaps next time she will not refuse to see you."

Claude decided to take his friend's advice, and he went home, hoping that, after all, things might turn out right.

Next morning his uncle entered the counting-room as cool, imperturbable and self-possessed as ever. He passed the army of clerks, and even Claude's desk, without a word. Usually he stopped and spoke a word to his nephew, but on this morning his conduct was marked by coldness toward him.

At eleven Monsieur Le Clerc entered and sent in his card. He was admitted at once. Half an hour later, Mr. Howells entered and sent his card to Mr. Morton's room; but was answered that Mr. Morton could not see him that morning.

The lawyer was astonished. It was the first time in twenty years he had been denied admittance to his client's office. The clerks were lost in wonder, and old Bob looked mysterious. Mr. Howells, without a word, clapped his hat on his head and left the counting-house.

For fully three hours the dark stranger and the merchant were closeted, and various were the surmises among the employees as to what they were discussing. At last Monsieur Le Clerc emerged from the private office, and, without looking to the right or left, passed out into the street.

That evening Claude called at the home of Hallie's aunt, and asked to see his betrothed. He was told that, though slightly indisposed, she would see him in a moment. He was shown to the parlor, and sitting on a sofa, amused himself gazing at the portraits on the wall. Among them was a portrait of Mr. George Tyler, painted when he was a young and successful merchant. It was a fine, handsome face, with clear blue eyes, and wore the same honest expression he had imparted to his only child.

"Had he only lived to return, what misery would have been spared!" Claude thought.

Hallie entered. She was paler and thinner than usual, but she looked very pretty in her dark mourning robes. He rose, took her hand and tenderly conducted her to the sofa. His expressions of grief and sympathy were deep and heartfelt, but under the circumstances he could offer no consolation, save that his love had grown stronger under the great affliction.

At last she raised her great, blue eyes to his and asked:

"Has your uncle told you anything yet?"

"Nothing," he answered, sadly.

"Why does he reserve those details, when he must know my heart is breaking?"

"Hallie, I believe my uncle is doing what he believes for the best—"

"Can it be for the best to torture me with uncertainty? He might tell me if my poor papa sent a last message to his child. He might tell me how he looked, where he died, and if he was buried. All these little details, trifling as they may seem to others, are precious to a bereaved one."

"Think no more of it, dear Hallie. He shall explain yet. And for the present let me take the place of protector and brother to you until I claim the greater right of husband."

"Claude," she said, sternly, "I will never consent to marry you while there is a shadow of a doubt about my father's death."

"Oh, Hallie, pray don't make such a terrible resolution. I know what you mean by it, and you don't know how stubborn uncle is. Last evening we quarreled because he refused to see you. He drove me from the house. He may disinherit me, but, though poor, what care I for that?"

"Do not quarrel with him, Claude. I would not have you do that; but after what has been said in private and published in the daily press, I would be unjust to the memory of my father if I married you while your uncle remains silent. Dearly as I love you, Claude, I cannot be your wife unless he explains."

"Surely, Hallie, you cannot believe those absurd insinuations?"

"No, no; yet his silence, so strange and so unaccountable, will be a barrier to our marriage."

"Then, by all the good and evil that is in my soul, I will have it out of him, or—"

"Claude, do nothing desperate. Do not anger him. I don't believe he ever liked me, because I am poor. Now that I am poor beyond any possible hope of being rich, he must despise me. He may be seeking by this very silence to prevent our marriage, and he has it in his power to succeed."

Claude left the house as miserable as a lover can be who has not been actually rejected.

A week passed, and still his uncle preserved his imperturbable rigidity toward him. He seldom spoke save on some business matter in which he was forced to give instructions. He was usually closeted with Mr. Howells or the stranger from Martinique, though all observed that he was careful never to admit both at once.

Claude called two or three times in succession on Hallie, but was denied admittance to the house. He did not despair. He supposed she was indisposed, and went again. He was thunderstruck at being informed that she was engaged and could not see him that evening. Not only was he amazed, but, despite all his good sense and faith in Hallie, just the least bit jealous.

"Who can she be receiving this evening?" he thought. "I will watch the house and see."

Then for three hours he shadowed the house. At last the great front door opened and the mysterious stranger whom he had seen so often go to his uncle's private office came forth. It was well that Claude Morton was near a lamp-post. Had he not caught it, he would have fallen to the pavement. Why was the Frenchman from Martinique calling on her? Where had she ever seen him, and how had she known that such a man existed? Filled with amazement, he started to follow the dark stranger, but soon lost him in the various turns he made.

Claude's first inclination was to go to his sweetheart and demand an explanation, but, after mature deliberation, he decided to wait and watch. Next day when the stranger came to make his usual call, Claude watched him closer than ever. He was quite sure he had never seen a more villain ous face in his life. There was little time to study his character, for he was almost immediately admitted to his uncle's private office, but in that brief interval he thought he recognized the deepest cunning, the boldest and most unscrupulous scoundrel he had ever met. When the dark stranger had disappeared in his uncle's office, Claude went over to the chief clerk's desk, and asked:

"What do you think of him, Bob?"

"He's a mystery," Bob answered, rubbing his hand over his bald head, a habit when anything puzzled him.

"That fellow is a villain, Bob. I will bet my life he is one of the greatest scoundrels that lives," declared Claude, his eyes flashing.

"Well, if he is, he's got the old man pretty well roped in, that is one thing certain."

"I believe uncle is gone mad—mad as a March hare."

Then old Bob shook his bald head and scribbled away in silence, and Claude went back to his desk and sat down to his work. The clerks were all silent; if they had any suspicions they kept them to themselves. Monsieur Le Clerc came in the forenoon and Mr. Howells in the afternoon, so there were no more collisions.

Another surprise was in store for Claude. One evening, while taking a stroll, he discovered two men coming toward him, walking leisurely, like friends arm in arm, and talking in low, earnest, confidential tones. There was something hateful about each and yet familiar, and when they came within the rays of the street lamp he started back amazed to recognize in the two gentlemen Monsieur Le Clerc and Ambrose Fletcher.

"Fletcher knows him!" he gasped, and stepping into a dark corner so as not to be recognized, he let them pass. When they had gone a block he followed after them. "Fletcher and the stranger from Martinique acquaintances! Why, how can this be?" he thought.

He followed them for a half mile, when they suddenly hailed a passing cab, and leaping into it, were driven rapidly away. He gave up trying to shadow them any farther, and went home more mystified and perplexed than ever. Claude spent a sleepless night tossing on his bed, and arose next morning with an aching head. He was at his desk for a short time, then went away just as Le Clerc made his morning call. While walking about the Park that afternoon trying to relieve his aching head and quiet his nerves, he met his friend Tom Coleman.

"Tom, I am glad to meet you," he said. "I do not know any one whom I would rather see at this moment."

"Why, what is the matter, Claude? You look serious."

"I am serious, my dear friend, and I have enough to make me so. There is no one save yourself in whom I can confide, or go to for advice. Come to this seat where we can talk undisturbed."

When they were seated, Claude continued:

"I am in great trouble, Tom."

"Trouble? The mischief! Why, if ever there was a fellow in the world who should not be in trouble, it's you. What have you to trouble you? It cannot be the everlasting question of food and shelter, which worries four-fifths of Adam's race into the grave."

"Those are the smallest questions in the affairs of life, when you come to consider the matter in a sensible light; but let us not moralize. I want to tell you more of the mystery that seems overshadowing my life."

"Are there new discoveries?"

"Yes."

"What are they?"

He then told how he had seen Le Clerc coming from an interview with Hallie, and later of seeing him in company with Fletcher.

Tom sat silent and speechless for a few moments, while his mind was busy with the mystery which had been puzzling the whole city. At last he said:

"Claude, there is more mystery mixed up in this affair than I ever heard or read about. First, your uncle comes from California, says your sweetheart's father was killed, but for some reason, which no one can understand, absolutely refuses to go into the particulars. That is the most inexplicable, unreasonable freak I ever knew any one to be guilty of. What object can he have for not going into the details of the affair? It seems very much like foolish stubbornness—"

"Those are the exact words I used to my uncle the night we quarreled."

"Then there is the tall, dark stranger from Martinique, or Hades—no one knows—the only man save the lawyer your uncle will see. Who is he? and what has he to do with the mystery?"

"Tom, do you suppose he has anything to do with it?"

"We don't know. Why is he admitted to your uncle's private office, when no one else is?"

"I don't know."

"Well, as we don't know, we will set these two 'don't knows' down, and say they equal X. Now there is the dark stranger plus your sweetheart, Y, and the dark stranger plus your rival, who equals Z. These unknown quantities form a sort of a quadratic equation that I bet no professor in mathematics at any college can solve."

"Tom, I am afraid you have not stated the problem correctly. There can be nothing between my uncle and Hallie. I am sure they never liked each other."

"But both receive the mysterious stranger?"

"Yes."

"On unknown business?"

"Yes."

"Well, there is a problem for you, and what mystifies me more is this Ambrose Fletcher and the stranger. I tell you, there is a circle within a circle, and you will see if the problem is ever solved. But can you get nothing from Hallie?"

"I have not seen her since the dark stranger was there."

"Call again."

"I have, but she won't see me."

"Call until you are sure she is purposely avoiding you."

Claude took his friend's advice and called again and again at the home of her aunt, but on one pretext or another was refused admittance. When next he met Tom and told him of his failures, that individual remarked:

"I've got part of it solved, Claude. There is an unknown mischief-maker at work."

"Who?"

"'Sh! Look to your left."

The friends had met on the street corner, and Claude, turning his head, glanced over his left shoulder. The dark stranger was coming down the street.

CHAPTER III.

THE MURDER.

The two friends stepped aside to let Monsieur Le Clerc pass. If he recognized either of them, his features were so well schooled he did not betray it.

When he had passed beyond ear-shot, Claude asked:

"Who is this meddler?"

"He is another unknown quantity. In fact, Claude, there are not letters enough in the alphabet to represent all the unknown quantities. I can't solve the problem. It's all as thick as mud to me. But it is clear that some one is making trouble between you and Hallie."

"Can it be he?" asked Claude, darting a look of anger after Le Clerc.

"I don't know."

When the friends met at their club, two or three days later, Claude said:

"I saw him coming again from her house, Tom."

"Does he still call daily on your uncle?"

"Almost daily."

Tom bowed his head in his hand, and said:

"That's what gets away with me. If he was only calling on Miss Tyler and holding his secret conferences with her, I would say that he had some evidence against your uncle and was consulting with her about it."

"That is impossible," Claude declared.

"Of course it is; but since we met last, I have seen him twice with Fletcher. Once they were in a restaurant talking in very confidential tones, as if they were discussing a subject of the greatest importance."

"Did you hear what was said by either?"

"Not a word, save that the Frenchman remarked that he was going in a day or two."

The stranger evidently kept his word, for a week passed and he did not put in an appearance at Mr. Morton's counting-house. It was rumored that he had told some one he was going to return to Martinique, and no one questioned that he had gone.

Though Mr. Morton seemed greatly perplexed and annoyed, he confided his troubles to no one. When Claude caught a glimpse of his face, as he occasionally did, and discovered that it was growing paler and thinner every day, he said:

"Poor Uncle Robert! If he would only share his trouble with me, how willingly would I share his burden."

"I say, Claude," called old Bob one day, just after the merchant had gone out, "don't you notice a great change in your uncle?"

"I do, Bob."

"He is growing very pale."

"This trouble, whatever it is, is wearing him out," Claude declared.

"Very fast, too, my boy."

"I wish I could help him, but he won't let me. He will share his secrets with no one, unless it is that man from Martinique."

"Claude, I don't believe he has shared it even with him."

"Then why were they so often together?"

"There is some business matter between them, I suppose. Some old unsettled account, probably. They parted with some unfriendly feeling."

"How do you know?"

The old chief clerk blushed, and said:

"Claude, I did a very unmanly thing to be listening, but, if ever one was justified in turning eavesdropper, it is one of us."

Claude, who had had serious thoughts of doing the same thing, grasped the chief clerk's hand, and cried:

"Tell me, Bob, tell me what you learned?"

"Not much," the old fellow answered, shaking his head. "But I believe from what I learned there is trouble between them. Your uncle said:

"'What you ask is impossible.'

"And Frenchy answered:

"'If you can't trust me, Monsieur, I will leave you, but you will never succeed without my help.'"

"Succeed in what?" cried Claude.

"Heaven only knows, I don't," old Bob answered.

"What else did you hear?"

"Nothing, except some angry exclamations, wholly unintelligible."

"Was the door of the office ajar?"

"No, but my ear was near the keyhole."

"When was that?"

"The last day Frenchy called to see your uncle."

"I am sorry you did not hear more."

"I was sorry I had heard so much. Have you and your uncle made up your quarrel?"

"No," Claude answered, with a sigh. "He won't speak to me."

"I heard a rumor that you had threatened him, because he would not give the particulars of the Tyler murder."

"We had a quarrel and both were quite angry. I hardly know what was said, but I know I did not threaten him. I am very sorry for what I said, yet when I think of his perverse stubbornness, I cannot feel very penitent. He does Hallie and myself a great injustice by refusing to give the details of that awful affair. There is no need for him to be so mysterious about it and to excite unjust suspicion. He won't even see Hallie. Who would not lose his temper under such circumstances?"

"His conduct is unaccountably strange, Claude."

"I sometimes think the papers are almost justified in their suspicions."

"No, no, no, Claude! You do not believe that!"

"I don't believe him guilty, but his mysterious silence makes suspicion justifiable."

"Have you seen Hallie recently?"

"No; she refuses to see me at all," he answered. "Her aunt, I am convinced, is working against me, and I fear she will never talk with me again."

Claude Morton left the counting-house that afternoon in a state of mingled anger, pity and remorse toward his uncle. He went to the Park, hoping to meet his friend, and just as he had about given him up, he came sauntering in at the gate.

"Hello, Claude; you here? Glad to see you, but would rather find a different expression on your face, especially as the time we shall be together is growing short."

"Why, Tom, are you really going away?"

"Yes, I sail in the brig *Francis.*"

"To California?"

"Yes."

"I wish you would take me with you."

"Only say the word and you shall go. The *Francis* doesn't sail for two or three days, and there will be time for you to think it over."

Claude was very serious, yet undecided. To go away and leave Hallie at this time might be the ruin of his happiness. His uncle and the prospect of an immense fortune were scarcely given a moment's thought. Hallie, and Hallie only, prevented him from deciding at once. She had refused to see him—told him she would never wed him until the mystery was cleared up, which his uncle stubbornly refused to do.

"It is only misery here, and I may forget it there," he thought. "Tom, I will give you my answer to-morrow. To-night I will do something desperate."

"What are you going to do that is desperate?" asked Tom.

"My uncle has not spoken to me since our quarrel. I will go and tell him I intend to leave unless he gives the details of the Nicaragua affair."

"If he does, you will stay?"

"Yes; and if he doesn't, I will go."

"Then I will engage a berth for you aboard the brig, for I know your uncle too well to suppose he will yield."

"If he refuses this request," said Claude, "he shall repent it."

They separated, and Claude prepared to call on his uncle. He was two or three hours thinking over what he should say to him.

The day passed, and when evening came he repaired to the house. He rang the bell, and was admitted by a servant in livery.

"Is my uncle in?" he asked.

"Why, bless my soul, it's Master Claude!" the servant cried. "You don't come around very often now."

"No, Moulton. Is uncle in?"

"Yes, he—he has been in his study since dinner. He must be taking his nap by this time."

"I want to see him, Moulton."

"I will tell him."

"No; do let me announce myself;" and he hurried past Moulton, who stood in the hall, muttering:

"Now, master won't be well pleased with this young fellow bolting in on him. The butler told me they did quarrel. Well, maybe he has come, like a good lad that he is, to make it up."

Meanwhile, Claude hurried toward his uncle's study. He was asking himself how he would be received, and was still framing the speech with which he was to make a last effort to win his uncle's favor. Pausing at the door of the study, the young man rapped gently. The study was at the extreme end of the long corridor, and neither study nor corridor had yet been lighted.

There came no response to his rap, and he tried the knob. It yielded to his touch and the door opened. The pale moonbeams streamed in from the open casement and dimly lighted the apartment. It was not sufficiently light for him to take an immediate survey of the objects within. But at last he discovered his uncle half sitting and half reclining in his large easy chair. His hands rested on the arms, his head had fallen back as if he was asleep.

"Pardon this intrusion, uncle," said the nephew, entering the apartment and carefully closing the door. "I have come to beg your pardon for anything I may have said that wounded your feelings, and to assure you of my love and respect."

The uncle did not move or speak.

"Are you asleep, uncle?" No response, and no movement. "Uncle, uncle! Why, this is strange!"

Slightly alarmed, he went to the side of the old man and laid his hand on that silver-sprinkled head. No movement. No sound. For a moment the young man stood gazing at him, struck dumb with an awful dread. The moon's pale rays fell upon the face, giving it a ghastly pallor; the eyes were open, staring and glassy, and the under-jaw had dropped.

"Uncle!" he whispered hoarsely. "Oh, Heaven, can it be?" He thrust his hand in his pocket, took out a match and lighted the gas.

Robert Morton was dead. There was a crimson stain on his dressing-gown over his heart, and a rent in his clothes showed where the dagger had gone. But where was the dagger and the hand that wielded it? He ran to the open casement, and glared out into the rear yard or court. No one was in sight. Then he searched the room for the assassin, or for the dagger with which the terrible deed had been done, but found none.

At last he raised the alarm, sent one servant for a doctor, and another for a policeman, while he threw his arms about the dead man and sobbed.

"Oh, uncle, uncle! Would to Heaven that you could speak one word—only one! Say that you forgive me!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 4.]

THE DANCER'S SHADOW.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Drifting about like a rosy leaf,
By the gusts of the music swayed,
Hither and thither, and to and fro,
Go maiden and dancing shade.

The light and the sunny glory gleam
On her partner's handsome face,
But the shadow only falls on me,
In the poor musician's place.

It seems a dream of the long ago:
The schoolhouse below the hill,
The winding walk, the brook's low talk,
And the whirr of the busy mill;

The shy, sweet smile, and the little hand,
Tight held in my own the while:
I don't remember a single shade
On the loitering love-lit mile.

Hither and thither, and to and fro,
My rose-leaf is flitting past.
Did I fancy it? Did she look at me?
Pshaw! Listen! "They play too fast."

* * * * * *

Her shadow fell on the violin,
And jangled its finest string,
Till the dancers turned, but they never guessed
How a broken heart was quivering.

Patience will come by and by, I know,
For a man must not wail and die
Over hopeless love. Would the day were here
And I stood by that "by and by."

The sodded grave of that buried love
I can fancy, but cannot see;
While the glory lightens her lover's face,
And the shadow is left for me.

PRACTICAL ENGINEERING.

At one time the United States Treasury Department made an inquiry for some assistant engineers. These were to be selected by a competitive examination, either under Civil Service rules or by special provisions of law.

There are long and tedious examinations with questions to which written answers must be given. The mistake of this means of selection lies in the fact that theoretical knowledge enables applicants to pass examinations where theory is not sufficient for practical action. A student may have been graduated with the highest honors of a technical school, but with all his theory and book knowledge he may be unable to run an engine or take care of it.

It is discouraging to a man who has made a life business of engineering to be turned out of employment because he cannot solve mathematical problems involving quadratic equations. The safest engineer is the man who has gone through a series of promotions and knows how to grease his engine as well as to handle his lever. Theory is excellent, but many people find themselves sadly at a loss when they attempt to put these theories into practice.

THE BEST SAVINGS BANK.

A number of simple-minded persons have been discussing speculations, speculators, booms, crazes, and the thousands of ways in which the few strive to beguile the cash from the pockets of the many. They have after due deliberation made up their minds that the savings bank, the little cottage in the suburbs, or a first mortgage on real estate are comfortably safe investments. If mines and schemes are so extremely desirable, why is it that the shares and stock must go a-begging, and money must be poured out in inducing people to buy? As a rule, no one need be enticed to pick up gold, and if these enterprises and mining schemes are so enormously valuable and yield such rich returns, why are they footballed around a world that is just pining for a chance to "strike pay dirt?"

WILLFUL PENELOPE.*

BY EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS,

Author of "A Conqueror of Fate," "Little Kit," "At a Great Cost."

["WILLFUL PENELOPE" was commenced in No. 48. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XV.

THE weeks sped by. Consequent upon his engagement of marriage, which to Denis had been a wholly unexpected thing, the autumn arrangements at Latimar Court were all altered. The house-party scattered by the middle of October, Mr. Latimar going up north to join a shooting gathering, Mrs. Rochdale and her daughter to London to start immediately on the preparations for the wedding, which was to take place the week before Christmas, and the rest of the guests dispersing in various directions.

For some reason—no one would have been able to explain exactly why—Denis Latimar's engagement was not what is called a popular one with his tenants and neighbors. Marcia was very little known, to begin with, and though her handsome face and figure had commanded attention and admiration, there was nothing winning, gracious or sympathetic about her.

Any woman following in the footsteps of Denis's dead mother would have had a hard task to fulfill all that was expected of one who reigned as mistress at Latimar Court.

Mrs. Latimar had made for herself such a place in the hearts of those around her that she had been at once a friend and a queen, as it were; a woman whose sweetness, gentleness and purity of heart had been allied with such dignity, such pride, such honor.

It was felt, dimly but surely, that Marcia Rochdale would never be able to fill the void left by the death of such a woman; and then Denis had done nothing himself to give a start to any enthusiasm in the matter of his forthcoming and speedy marriage.

In fact, it was a general subject of discussion how changed the young master had become. Of course, this change was in no way associated with his engagement—indeed, far from it. It was universally believed that Denis was making a "love-match," and, on the face of it, it seemed so to outsiders, there being no other ostensible reason for the marriage but affection; and it was partly because of this love for one who was so cold and unsympathetic in appearance as Marcia that roused up the vague feelings of regret that were passing round.

Denis was much beloved by all, and the world of Stevenstone took the deepest interest in his fortunes and probable happiness or unhappiness.

No; although it was felt, for the reason mentioned, that in marrying Marcia Rochdale Denis would not have a plethora of happiness, still no one imagined that it was the influence of his betrothed that brought that grave look on the formerly sunny face, and made a quiet, reserved man of the bright, boyish young fellow who had had a laugh and a merry word for every one he met.

"He has never got over his mother's death." That was the prevailing explanation for the change, and it was one that was easily understood and sympathized with.

If Mrs. Latimar's death had left such a blank in the hearts of so many who were not bound to her by any tie, how deep and wide must be the void in the heart of her son, her only child, the being she had loved so fervently, and who had reverenced her in turn as one would reverence an angel or a saint?

"Aye, it's his mother he's fretting about," was the comment made from many a lip; and so Denis's changed looks became a recognized fact, although there were many, and those were chiefly of the female persuasion, who were surprised a little to see no lightening of the gloom and preoccupied air when the news of the young man's engagement and speedy marriage to follow became general news.

With the departure of the bride-elect and the rest of the party from Latimar Court, the interest and excitement about the engagement died down a little. It would revive again at Christmas time, when Denis was to bring his new-made wife home to the beautiful old house.

But gossip is an essential ingredient of the air and breathing space in a village, and if one thing is not to the fore there is always another.

The other subject of talk and comment, after Denis and his house-party had been dispersed, was the daily, hourly weakening of poor Mrs. Desborough, and the marvelous love and devotion with which she was nursed by her daughter, Penelope.

Somehow or other, perhaps through Doctor Westall, perhaps through Madge Riley, or the little maid, Kate, the story of Penelope's accident and her brave, tender conduct became known to every one.

The story was one that went straight to the hearts of all, for Mrs. Desborough was scarcely less beloved than her friend Mrs. Latimar had been, and Penelope was popular with every living soul about the place.

The girl's eagerness to shield her mother, to keep her a little longer on earth, to brighten her last days by every means in her power, was, in its way, a poem of love: and as such, it was understood and admired by all who knew her and watched her devotion.

For one day Doctor Westall had insisted on Penelope's remaining in bed—a laughing excuse of stiffness and idleness was given to Mrs. Desborough, who received it in good faith—but after that one day Penelope flatly refused obedience to the medical authority.

"Tie up my leg, put on as many splints and bandages as you like, but stand up and walk I mean to; so now you know, Doctor Westall!" she had said, coolly.

Doctor Westall had lashed himself into a fury.

"Yes, now I know; and I know more, my young madam. I know you'll be a cripple to the end of your days, all through some idiotic, nonsensical—" and then Doctor Westall changed his tone. "Look here, Penelope," he said, coaxingly, "you'll just stay in bed another day or two to please me, won't you?"

Penelope's answer was very terse.

"No, Doctor Westall, I won't!" she said.

"But—" began the old gentleman, in a fluster.

"But," the girl had said, lifting her blue eyes to his, with a smile, "but you may talk till doomsday. I shan't listen, and I shall do what I intend to do. I haven't broken a bone; it's only a sprain, and I can get about with a little limp, perhaps, but not very bad, and then I shan't have my mother tearing up and down stairs, and working herself into a fever every half-hour, probably thinking I am going to die. I know my mother, Doctor Westall, better than you do. Oh, yes!"—Penelope waved her small hand—"oh, yes, you give yourselves great airs just because you take a diagnosis, or do something funny, with a stethoscope; but, you know, any one can do that."

"Impertinent minx!" broke in Doctor Westall, with a smile on his good-natured face, and a tenderness in his eyes that belied his very abrupt, sometimes rough manner. "You deserve to be well spanked, Miss Penelope."

Penelope put out her hand and touched his.

"You can do all that and many, many clever things, but—" her voice faltered—"you can't put new life into her. You can't keep her here very much longer. Oh, don't be angry with me, dear old friend. It goes to my heart to see the faintest shadow on her face. Now, if she finds I am so seriously hurt as to have to stay in bed all strapped up like a mummy, what do you think she will not suffer? No, I can move my leg, and I will not lie here and feel that I have, perhaps, been the cause of shortening her precious life one single hour through anxiety about me. She will see me limp, of course, but I can easily explain it away, and—"

"And the pain, child—have you thought of that? You will have some very bad moments with that ankle, let me tell you, Miss Pen—"

"When I cry out, you shall be there to hear," was Penelope's reply. "I am not frightened by pain, at least not very much."

But she was only human, despite the divine love that filled her heart, and in the days that followed Penelope found that she did mind the pain very much indeed. At times it was almost insupportable, and her courage and strength would fail her; but after a little while of rest snatched during an hour of sleep for the invalid, a few moments now and then in which she might recline the heavy limb that was full of such burning suffering and relax the tension of her nerves, her courage, her will and her strength would revive, and she would go on in her task of devotion, which grew more dear and more hopeless every day.

Almost immediately after Penelope's accident, Mrs. Desborough had caught a slight cold, which developed slowly but surely into a sort of low fever. It was chiefly the excessive weakness that had prostrated her that blinded the mother's eyes to Penelope's crippled condition, and if it had not been for the sorrowful dread that weighed so heavily upon her, the girl could have almost rejoiced at such a state of things, for she was only too thankful for [illegible]ing that would save her dear one [illegible] anxiety. And Mrs. Desborough h[illegible] the least idea of the truth.

One day as she was sitting in her chair by the fire, exhausted by the toil of leaving her bed for an hour or so, she turned her eyes on Penelope.

"I wish you would go out to-day, my darling," she said. [illegible] Why not have another ride? It will do you good, you know; you are not nearly so fine a baby as you used to be!"

"I shall go and sit in the garden this afternoon for a little while, mumsey. I don't care to ride, and Madge is away. How I wish you could come down into the sun. Do you know, it is hotter now in November than it was in July. We are having an Indian summer, mumsey."

Penelope spoke in her brightest fashion and turned the conversation; but as she rose to give her mother something she asked for, Mrs. Desborough glanced at her quickly.

"Have you hurt yourself, Pen dear? You are a little lame, I think?" she asked, anxiously.

"I have got an awful corn," the girl answered quickly, "and it reminds me of its existence every now and then."

"A corn, Pen dear! And your feet were so lovely, not a blemish on them. You must not wear such tight shoes, my darling; and don't stand too much to-day; you look as if you were in pain."

"I am all right, my dearest," Pen said, earnestly, and then she opened the book she held and began reading aloud. By and by, when the heavy eyelids had closed and Mrs. Desborough lay back in her chair asleep, the girl rose and limped to the window.

She was terribly, miserably unhappy in these sad days, oppressed with a feeling of utter loneliness in addition to her other trouble. She had no one to whom she could turn. Lucie and her husband were many thousand miles away; Penelope did not even know now where a letter would reach the travellers; and sometimes, as at this moment, the thought, the horrible fear, came upon her that she ought to write and summon Lucie home as fast as she could come, if she would wish to see her mother once again. Lucie away, Madame Latimar dead, Denis lost forever, her few intimate friends in Stevenstone absent from their homes!

She felt a sense of chilliness and repugnance at the thought of turning to her aunt Julia or Marcia; another and deeper sense of utter impossibility of finding or permitting comfort from Harold De Burgh. There was no one at this moment to whom Penelope could look for definite consolation or affection, save, perhaps, old Doctor Westall, who came daily to the cottage and insisted on doing all in his power for the injured ankle and leg, which, though of course in a very poor condition, was, thanks to the girl's marvelous constitution and health, far from being so bad as the doctor had feared and expected.

There were dozens of people, acquaintances, scattered about who would have been only too ready to give their sympathy to Penelope, had she been disposed to receive it; but the child shrank from this—it pained her to read the pity and regret painted so legibly on the faces around her. It seemed to her so cruel that every one should accept the coming end as a fact already accomplished.

Although she saw her mother actually fading before her eyes, Penelope would not let hope die out of her heart; and so it was she shut herself apart from the overtures of the many who, not understanding the exquisite sensitiveness of her love, were a little hurt that she would have none of them or their sympathy.

And yet, out of all this sorrow and increasing anxiety, Penelope had been given comfort in another form. It had been impossible for her to sit and think over the cruel mistake she had made, over the misery wrought in Denis Latimar's life as well as in her own. With her heart perpetually wrung by anxiety and fear about her mother, these thoughts were pushed on one side, the poignancy of her grief, of her hopeless, despairing love, of her intense regret and remorse, was toned down by the other vivid sorrow that never left her night or day.

If even her love had not prompted her, or her cause for action been so great, it would have been more than Penelope could have borne to have lain quiescent in her bed in those days following on her last interview with Denis.

Sometimes, at odd moments in the long night hours, when she sat in her mother's room ready to obey the slightest movement or whisper, there would come to her one flash of pleasure, a ray of golden light that warmed and thrilled her with its glory and power.

It was the remembrance that Denis no longer held her in contempt and dislike—that he knew her to be what she really was. Even when she realized what the full meaning of this must be to him now—and, perhaps, Penelope did not and could not realize such a thing absolutely—she could not put aside this pleasure. It was so natural and so beautiful to her, and she had no other gleam of sunshine in the dark, shadowed path of her present or her future.

If she had had time and freedom in which to think over everything thoroughly, it is most certain Penelope must have suffered many qualms over the folly that her girlish intolerance and almost quixotic pride had driven her to.

She had grown more of a woman, less of a child, in the last few weeks, and though the sunshine of her nature would gleam and sparkle to the very end, she had learned already the wise lesson of control in all things, even in those that seemed good and honorable.

Fortunately for her peace of mind, this trouble was spared her for the moment, and indeed, she barely turned aside for an instant from the one great burden of her thoughts to let her mind dwell either on her own trouble or on any other question.

News of preparation for the wedding reached her now and then. Mrs. Rochdale was possessed of one mania—she might have been called a professional letter-writer. No matter what claims she had upon her time, she would always dispatch at least a dozen letters every morning of her life. She always began by saying she had not a moment to spare, and ended by filling four pages with a ceaseless flow of news concerning herself and her belongings.

From her aunt, therefore, Penelope learned nearly all there was to learn about Marcia's trousseau and her presents; she was given little bits of news about Denis, who was still up north, shooting. The smallest details of the arrangements for the wedding ceremony were written down for the edification of Stevenstone in general, rather than for Penelope in particular.

An invitation, coldly worded, had been sent from Marcia to her cousin, asking for her services as bridesmaid on that auspicious occasion; but Penelope had declined by return of post, giving her mother's health as her excuse.

She felt that this decision would be not at all unwelcome to Marcia, although she was far from imagining the dislike and jealousy with which Marcia regarded her. She knew that there was very little love entertained for her by the bride-elect, and for this reason—if for no other—she would have refused the invitation.

The other reason was one so potent that she shivered as she realized what she would have to endure in such an hour.

To have to stand decked out in laces and silks, and assist at Denis Latimar's wedding, was something not even Penelope's phenomenal courage could have well supported.

She wrote very seldom to the big house at Rutland Gate. She was always chilled and hurt by the selfish indifference shown by Mrs. Rochdale to the state of her sister's health.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Rochdale was inclined to regard Mrs. Desborough in the light of a hypochondriac, and had very little sympathy with the anxious love and care both Lucie and Penelope had bestowed on their mother.

As for Marcia, she never thought of her aunt now, except with a sort of sullen anger; she had not forgotten or forgiven Mrs. Desborough for the way in which she had received the news of the engagement.

If she gave a thought to the sick woman, or realized the gravity of her condition as conveyed in Penelope's few brief letters, it was to frown sharply with annoyance.

"I trust most certainly Aunt Marian will not take it into her head to die this side of Christmas—it would be so awkward," she said now and then to her mother.

Mrs. Rochdale always reassured her.

"Oh! Marian will not die for another twenty years—creaking doors hang longest, and she is surrounded with such care that she may last goodness knows how long. Besides," and here Mrs. Rochdale had the grace to color a little with confusion at her own words, "even if—if the worst should happen, need that make any difference?—I mean, so few people know—"

"To me," Marcia had said, coldly, and not in the least shocked by her mother's suggestion, "it would not make the smallest difference. I have heard so often and so long that Aunt Marian is going to die that, really, I am fully prepared for the event, which, as you say, would interest very few people outside ourselves. In this case, however, you must remember Denis. I expect he would regard the matter in a very different light. He has a very curious infatuation for Aunt Marian which, I confess, is not easily accounted for by me, but"—and Marcia had shrugged her shoulders—"*chacun à son goût*, and I can only hope Aunt Marian will be so considerate as to defer dying until after we are married."

CHAPTER XVI.

November drew to a close. It had been a month of extraordinarily fine weather, the sun had shone every day, and the warmth had been at noontime strong and almost summerlike. The bright weather seemed to shed a little glory into the wasted frame of the invalid. Penelope's love-hope had become almost real as she saw this change wrought by the sunshine in her beloved mother.

"If only the sun would last!" she said to herself over and over again.

How she wished at this time that Denis had carried out his plan, and that her mother had been taken south from the cold weather and winds. Mentone would perhaps have been the salvation of the poor, delicate creature. Penelope yearned even now to waft her mother southward, but Doctor Westall always shook his head.

"We must wait for another year," he said, knowing well in his heart, however, that gentle Marian Desborough would never see another winter.

Lucie had written, from some distant spot, a letter full of happiness and wonder at the marvels that her travels unfolded to her, but saying earnestly and truly that if her mother had need of her she would set sail with her husband immediately and return to England and Stevenstone.

This letter had come at the end of November, when the invalid had seemed so much better, and neither mother nor daughter would hear of recalling Lucie home just yet.

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"We shall see her in the spring," Mrs. Desborough said, with her sweet smile.

She knew as well as her old doctor that on earth she would never see that spring; but she hid her knowledge from her baby's eager eyes, and spoke of hope and life as though a stream of strength and vigor had rushed into her feeble frame.

In December came the change, and then Penelope saw she had been wrong not to bring her sister home.

What days those were—what milestones of misery, of anguish, of a despair past description! There was nothing to do—that was the worst—nothing but to sit with hands wrung together and face white and fixed, watching the paroxysms of pain and waiting for the end which alone could bring peace and rest to the wornout spirit and body.

That end came at last, on a night a week before Christmas.

Penelope had lost count of time. She was weary with watching and with suffering. Every pang of pain had seemed to rack her sympathetic system, every moan had seemed to come from her lips, every prayer for release had found an echo in her heart.

As she realized it was all over at last, as she stood beside the bed, and looked down on the wan, wasted beauty of her beloved dead, Penelope was conscious of one definite feeling, one absolute sensation—relief, acute, determined, sincere relief.

"She is free at last!" she said, looking up into Doctor Westall's wet eyes after that last long perusal of her mother's face. "She is free at last, thank Heaven!"

She dully felt the clasp of the doctor's hands. She was in a dream of thoughts, confused chaotic thoughts that raced through and through her brain, as though intoxicated by some wild stimulant.

Penelope never quite remembered the end of that night. She had stood for a long time at an open window, till a chill, sharp as pain, had run through her frame, and she had turned at last at Kate's tearful urging, and had lain on her bed.

There the sound of bells clanging out cheerily, merrily, reached her comprehension, forcing a way through the cloud of thoughts and jarring on her nerves.

She gave a cry as this happened.

"Those bells—those horrible bells!" she said wildly to Kate, who had been frightened at her calm, stonelike composure. "Those bells—why will they not hush? They hurt me, they hurt me!"

Kate took her hands soothingly.

"Doctor Westall he have gone down to the church straight, a few minutes ago, Miss Penelope. They're ringing a chime to-night because it's Mr. Latimar's wedding-day; but when they know—"

And Kate broke off with a sob. Tears that were denied to Penelope came easily to her eyes. Even as she ceased speaking there had come a pause in the merry chime—a silence that was full of eloquence; then, after awhile, there rang out one single bell solemnly with a weird, sorrowful stroke. It proclaimed to the world around that on the very day of rejoicing at Latimar Court, while even the first notes of congratulation were being uttered to one well-loved member of their number, grim death had stolen in softly upon another, and garnered her to a sleep that would know no awakening.

* * * * * *

The funeral was a thing of the past; Marcia Rochdale had been Marcia Latimar a full fortnight. She was back in London after an exceedingly short honeymoon in Paris.

News of Mrs. Desborough's death was not written to the newly married couple immediately, through Mrs. Rochdale's manipulation; but about four days after his arrival in Paris, glancing in a casual way at a copy of the *Times*, Denis read the intelligence of Penelope's loss and of the end of her mother's sufferings.

Without thought of anything but deep regret and sorrow, Denis immediately stated his intention of returning to England, which was received quietly enough outwardly by Marcia, but which caused her heart to seethe with hot anger and jealousy within.

"Is there any real necessity for your return?" she had said, trying to put a touch of feeling in her voice. "You can do nothing now, and—"

"I must follow her to her grave," Denis answered, too deeply lost in his thoughts to mark his wife's objection to his wish. "She was my mother's cherished friend, and I loved her."

Marcia pinched in her lips. She was not only vexed at her husband's strongly-shown interest in this manner, but also at their leaving Paris in this speedy fashion. She was just tasting the first-fruits of enjoyment in her new position. There were numerous people in Paris, friends and acquaintances with whom she had intended finding much amusement, and for whose benefit she had planned a series of new toilets, and before whose eyes she had meant to flash in the splendor of her new life.

To have to return to England and to Latimar Court under such circumstances was appalling to Marcia, and she did not in the least recognize the fact that she must put on one side her costly trousseau gowns and appear in mourning for one whom she did not mourn.

However, there was nothing to be done but to meet the disappointment with as much outward cheerfulness as possible. Marcia had no intention of showing herself to her husband in her real colors, at least not just yet. Vanity was the predominant reason for this course of action. She now longed, with a zest that was something new to her, to win back from her husband the sincere admiration and regard she had received from him before their engagement. She had obtained all she had desired—his wealth, his position, command of his many homes—but she was not satisfied. Until she had won him altogether, until she had wrested from Penelope the power she held over Denis, until she had made her husband blind to her faults and fascinated by her charms, Marcia would not be content.

She was keen enough to know her only chance—if indeed she had a chance at all—lay in touching Denis in his most vulnerable point—in appealing to his natural, chivalrous belief in and goodness of all women, in seeming to him to be the character and nature he had imagined before that eventful drive in the dark night and the rain. Had she given rein to her temper, had she removed the restraint from her tongue, had she allowed herself to be natural, Marcia would have been shut out of her husband's sympathy forever. As it was, she noticed that though Denis could disguise his feelings well, that though to all outward appearance he seemed a devoted and admiring husband, he was in reality colder than ice itself; that though he made no sort of pretense in his manner towards her, yet that it was plain that the man was going through some struggle with himself and his conscience, and that it was certain he was trying with all the strength of his great honor to overcome his love for Penelope, and to fit himself into his proper groove as a husband to herself.

So it was that Marcia made no open objection to going back to England; all she did ask was to be allowed to remain in London with her mother, while Denis went to Stevenstone; and he agreed to this most willingly. There had been a discussion between Marcia and Mrs. Rochdale as to Penelope's future.

"She should make her home with Lucie," said the elder lady; "there is no question about that; but I don't believe Penelope will agree to it."

"Beggars cannot be choosers," said Mrs. Denis Latimar, curtly, "and I suppose Penelope cannot regard herself otherwise than as a pauper."

"She will have about a hundred a year, which is really quite a small fortune for a girl in her position."

"Why does she not live with that uncle, her father's brother—there is some one like that, is there not?" Marcia said.

Mrs. Rochdale gave a shudder.

"A most horrid, disreputable old creature—a miser, or something like that. No doubt he is very rich, but he must be very mean, or he would have done something for poor Marian."

Marcia soon lost her interest in Penelope's future.

"Well, at all events, thanks to Denis's mother," she said, "Penelope has had a splendid education, which she will have to turn to account now, if she is too proud to accept a home with her sister."

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 4.]

DARBY, THE BEAR-HUNTER OF ALASKA.*

BY SEWARD W. HOPKINS,

Author of "In the China Sea," "Two Gentlemen of Hawaii," etc.

["DARBY, THE BEAR-HUNTER OF ALASKA" was commenced in No. 47. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the News-dealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE great wedding, feast and joy-dance of the Tananahs were over.

Most of the warriors were still rolling round in a drunken brawl, but Mesouga had withdrawn his presence and had sought his tent.

Maxom and I were alone, or sufficiently isolated for conversation.

I had been in a maze of wonder, surprise and doubt since the absence of Tahnag had been discovered. Not that that fact alone caused wonder. I had seen the chief dancing on the very edge of the cliff. The wonder would have been if he had not gone over. Had he been sober, it would have been different.

"There is something about this disappearance of the chief that I don't understand, Maxom," I said.

He smiled—a grim sort of smile, utterly without mirth.

"It is not an easy thing for any one to understand," he replied.

"Oh," I said, "it is not so much his disappearance in itself that puzzles me, but your complacent way of taking it. Knowing your great friendship for the Kotch, I should expect a greater show of feeling over his death."

He smiled again and a gleam came into his eyes when he looked at me.

"Wetmore," he said, "there is no human being I think so much of, excepting of course, the Marshalls and yourself, and John Bazely and his wife, as I do of Tahnag. It would be a bitter loss to me if I knew he was dead."

"If you knew he was dead!" I repeated. "Great Scott! Is there any room for doubt?"

"It seems hardly possible, I will admit," he said. "But you don't know Tahnag as well as I do. Just recall the incidents of this feast and dance. To begin, the Kotch was away from us for some time, no doubt pondering upon the question how to escape. Whatever conclusions he may have reached, he had no time to communicate them to us. Mesouga was always near, and I suppose it was more to his purpose to make the great Tananah believe his love for us had changed to dislike, and that his Indian nature had regained the ascendency. Then the manner in which he spoke to us was utterly at variance with his nature. I firmly believe it was studied and assumed for the occasion."

"Granting all that," I answered, "what good will it all do now? Had he remained sober, he might have carried some kind of scheme to perfection, but even that is beyond my conception. Anyhow, drunk as he was, what could he do?"

"There it is again," said Maxom. "As long as I have known Tahnag, I have not seen him drunk. In fact, I know he hates whisky like poison. In short, I believe that when he disappeared he was as sober as we are."

"Do you think so?" I asked, in surprise. "He certainly looked and acted like a drunken man to me. But you know him better than I do. You may be right. But admitting that you are right—suppose he *was* sober—he must have met his death if he went over the cliff. And I see no other way that he could have escaped."

Maxom stroked his mustache meditatively.

"It would seem so," he said; "yet his manner was so carefully studied—the new *rôle* he played having no doubt been chosen with a purpose—I feel loth to believe that accident has befallen him. I feel almost confident that he is even now hiding in some snug spot that neither Mesouga nor I know anything about."

"I hope so, most sincerely," I said.

The remainder of the day was spent by us in comparative quiet, and the camp was undisturbed, save the usual demonstrations of joy when, toward evening, a hunting party returned with some geese and a fine caribou, shot, so Maxom told me, near the headwaters of the stream that rushed past us toward the Yukon.

The next morning I happened to be up a few seconds ahead of Maxom, and stepping to the entrance of the hut, I saw a crowd of savages around the lodge of Mesouga.

"Hello!" I said. "There is a great commotion among the Tananahs. Come and see."

He stepped out by my side and looked.

"Shamanism," he said.

"Well, what is that?" I asked.

"Medicine business," he replied. "You are familiar with it. Don't the red Indians of the plains have charm-doctors, great medicine-men, and all that?"

"Indeed they do; but I see no charm-doctor in that crowd."

"It is too early. He will appear soon. They are now supplicating him. I wonder who is ill. Let's go and see."

We walked toward the crowd.

Delobrek, he who had won first choice of brides, stood before the tent next to Mesouga's, beating his breast and chanting. As in the former case of the songs of the Tananahs, I will insert it here as it was afterward interpreted to me—as was all that was said by these savages, except that spoken to us by Mesouga, who used the English language.

"The heart of Delobrek the hunter is sad," he sung,
"And the heart of Delobrek, the great warrior of the Tananahs, will break,
For the bad spirit has come into his lodge,
And the Pigeon of the Rats, who is Delobrek's wife, is full of the bad spirit,
And will die! And will die!
That is why the heart of Delobrek is broken,
And his eyes can no longer look upon the sun,
Nor his mouth tell if his food be good or bad,
Nor his spear be used in many days to kill the bear,
Or the caribou, or the sheep, or the salmon,
For Delobrek, the mighty hunter, must remain in his lodge and mourn.
And no more can his war club be used against the enemies of his people,
Not for many days.
For the mighty warrior of the Tananahs must put aside his war paint
And cover himself with bark
And remain in his lodge and mourn
When the Pigeon dies.
But there is one among the Tananahs
Who is greater than Mesouga,
Who is greater than Delobrek,
Who is greater than the bad spirit—
His name is Koskopog. His name is Koskopog!
He is the mighty Shaman of the Tananahs.
He alone can save the Pigeon for Delobrek!
Shall Delobrek's lodge be dark and lonely
With the Pigeon silent?
Or shall it be gay and light with the presence of the Pigeon
And her happy song? And her happy song.
Come, oh, Koskopog, and drive away the evil spirit.
Oh, Koskopog, come. The gratitude of Delobrek shall be yours.
The gratitude of the Pigeon shall be yours.
The gratitude of Mesouga and all the Tananahs shall be yours.
Come, Koskopog. Koskopog, oh, come."

When he had finished, there was an impressive silence, lasting about five minutes.

No reply came from the Shaman's tent.

It was as if the appeal of Delobrek had been unheard.

Then Luk-luk, who had been second to Delobrek in the contest for wives, stepped before the door of the Shaman, and sang thus:

"Oh, Koskopog! It is Luk-luk, the friend of Delobrek, who sings.
His lodge is happy and bright, for in it the Warbler of the Rats
Makes all the days like summer,
And her voice is always music in the ear of Luk-luk.
And the mighty warrior of the Tananahs
Is sad for his friend, Delobrek,
For Delobrek is a warrior
And a hunter
Greater than any among the Tananahs, except Luk-luk, Mesouga and a few.
Yet Delobrek is sad.
His heart weeps and bleeds,
For the Pigeon, his wife, is dying.
Then Koskopog, the mightiest Shaman of Alaska
Can save her. Can save her.
And he will,
Because Luk-luk asks it."

When Luk-luk had finished his song, there was a murmur among the crowd, as if to applaud the friendship between these two young warriors.

All eyes were fixed upon the entrance of the Shaman's hut.

It was certain that this appeal would not go unheeded.

At last the decorated skin of the Shaman's tent moved slowly. It seemed as if it moved even reluctantly.

Then, slowly moving into the open space, came the most grotesque—the most wonderfully gotten-up creature I had ever seen.

His advent was attended with no demonstrations.

He was too sacred. The silence of awe—of humble worship was over all.

This Shaman, or medicine-man of the Tananahs, wore his hair tied up in several knots. Into each one of these knots was fastened the "wish-bone" of a goose, and from the two "feet" of the wish-bone hung a long string of twisted hair and feathers, gayly colored with red clay.

Atop of all, he wore a tremendous coronet of feathers from the tail and wings of the eagle.

The face of the Shaman was disfigured beyond description. Running laterally through the upper lips was a bone at least three inches long, which caused the lip to protrude in the most disgusting manner. And from the ends of the bone were suspended shining black beads, which rattled when he shook his head.

The natural lines of his face had been almost obliterated. What with great patches of the ever-present red clay, and protuberances made by the insertion of nose and lip ornaments, the physiognomy of Koskopog was no more pleasing than his name.

Around his neck was a necklace of bear's claws, and attached to this was a Greek cross in silver, the relic, no doubt, of some unfortunate Russian long since passed to his fathers by means of Tananah treachery and cruelty. Somehow the presence of the cross on the breast of that murderous-looking heathen jarred on my nerves unpleasantly.

The coat of this fellow was made of the skins of sables, and as economy had played no part in its manufacture, it was a garment that might well arouse the envy of the fashionable people of the cities.

Around the bottom of the coat was a row of glass balls, many of them broken, being probably all that remained of a supply gathered during the early days of primitive barter when one ball like these would buy from the simpler natives a cloak of sable or ermine worth hundreds of dollars.

The Shaman wore gaudily-painted leggings of buckskin, over which was drawn a pair of high boots made of bearskin, fur side out, with a heavy sole made of walrus hide, obtained either in trade or by conquest from some of the tribes near the shore.

The Shaman moved silently and majestically onward, motioning for Delobrek to lead the way.

As the secrecy generally surrounding the performances of the medicine-men of the plains was absent here, Maxom and I proposed to witness all that was done. To me it was a matter of interest, but there was something in Maxom's manner that seemed to tell me without words that the welfare of "the Pigeon" in some way bore directly on our own fate. But there was no time to talk—in fact, the silence was so impressive that a word from either of us would have sounded startlingly loud.

Delobrek led the way to his hut, the Shaman following him, and Maxom and I keeping close in the wake of the Shaman, for if the ceremony of driving out the evil spirits was carried on inside the hut there would not be room for all, and we intended to get in.

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We were successful in getting inside the hut, where upon a pile of skins lay "the Pigeon," truly a pretty girl for a native, her eyes rolling up at Delobrek and the Shaman in a piteous appeal for life.

The Shaman bent over her, and mumbled some words that seemed to satisfy her, for she lay back on her rude couch and closed her eyes, muttering a sigh of relief.

Koskopog turned to Delobrek and issued a command.

The warrior fetched a lamp—the usual stone kind filled with oil and a wick of moss, and the Shaman hung some metal plates about the size of a silver dollar over it. When these where heated he placed them by the side of the Pigeon's head.

The poor girl now gave every evidence of being very ill, and I ventured to ask Maxom what was the matter.

He looked at me a moment before he replied, and I thought his face was paler than usual.

"I do not know what to call it," he said. "I have seen the Indians along the Porcupine affected the same way, but my knowledge of diseases is too limited for me to know what it is. Anyhow, any offer of ours to assist in curing her would not avail, for they will not allow any one but the Shaman to do that. One thing is plain to me, and that is that this girl is going to die."

Our talking must have disturbed the Shaman, for he turned his horrid face toward us, and made it known by signs that he wanted the hut cleared.

Even Delobrek was driven out, and we stood in a group, waiting for news.

For a time all was silence.

Then we heard the low, weird tones of the Indian chant.

Then again all was still.

Then a hand was protruded from the tent and beckoned.

Delobrek went inside.

Never was a life hung upon with more anxiety than that of the new-made bride of the Tananah warrior.

An hour went by.

Then another.

Maxom walked back and forth, his eyes bent upon the ground. Hadleigh came out of his tent but little, and seemed to take no interest in anything save himself.

The Shaman came from Delobrek's hut, and the crowd parted, as in awestruck silence they made a passageway for the great medicine-man. He walked to his own hut, and was hidden inside for about ten minutes. Then he reappeared, armed with a long knife. He whispered a few words to one of the young men who had been a member of the hunting party the day before.

The hunter turned away and was lost to view among the huts. In a moment he reappeared, carrying a live goose. This he gave to the Shaman, who took it, and once more went into Delobrek's hut.

"It *is* serious," said Maxom quietly, as he passed me; and I thought little of his remark, except, of course, that he meant the girl was going to die.

Again we waited, almost breathlessly, while the Shaman was inside the hut. Now and then we could hear the voices of Delobrek and the Shaman in broken, subdued conversation.

Suddenly from inside the tent came a piercing shriek of woe, and Delobrek rushed from it and cast himself face downward on the snow, moaning and shrieking in turn.

The Shaman came forth, with bowed head walking toward his own tent. His body was bent in sorrow and in shame. His arts had failed. He stood before his people as a man who had failed.

The Pigeon of the Rats was dead.

"Do you know what that means to us?" asked Maxom, calmly, when we had fully realized the significance of the scene.

"No," I answered. "I didn't know it had anything to do with us."

"It has this to do," he said. "It is the law among these Indians that when one of them dies, the only way to insure a happy hereafter for the soul is to kill an enemy. And if that enemy happens to be a white man, so much the better."

"Phew!" I said. "Our situation is more critical than I thought. Pray to God that Tahnag *was* sober when he left us, and that he will find some way to get us out of this difficulty."

"Before one of us is killed," he added.

"Before one of us is killed," I repeated, having little faith that what I hoped for would come to pass.

How could one man—though he was a chief—combat the hundreds of savages that Mesouga had with him?

The more I looked at it, the more hopeless I became.

"I wish I had a handful of the Second Cavalry here," I said, "I'd soon put that rascal Mesouga where he belongs."

"But you have not," said Maxom.

"True," I said, "I had already thought of that. I have *not*."

CHAPTER XXV.

From the moment the death of "the Pigeon" was known, it was plain that a new interest was awakened in the minds of the Tahanahs, who watched us furtively, and in the savage gleams of their eyes could be seen a terrible menace and anticipation of revenge.

Soon after the unhappy event, Mesouga emerged from his tent and stalked forward, without paying us any attention, to a little knoll or hummock of snow, from which he could command a view of the distant Yukon.

He stood in silence several minutes, gazing moodily upon the gleaming water, and then turned again toward his huts.

Suddenly his eyes seemed to light upon us, and a ferocious glare blazed from them.

Changing his course, he came toward us.

Pausing before us, he stiffened himself up, to appear the autocrat he really was, and, in a calm voice, he addressed us:

"Have the white brothers of Mesouga seen anything to-day to make them sad?" he asked.

"The heart of the white man is always sad in the presence of death," replied Maxom.

"And does the heart of the white man tell him that he has killed the pretty wife of Delobrek?"

"No. The consciences of the white men are easy. They have never killed anybody. The wife of Delobrek was very ill. If the white men could have saved her, they would gladly have done so. But if the great Shaman of the Tananahs fails, what can a poor white man do?"

At the mention of the Shaman a fierce gleam lit up the countenance of the chief.

"And does the white man called Bear-Hunter know what Koskopog, the great Shaman of the Tananahs, says about the death of the bride of Delobrek?"

"No," said Maxom. "What does he say?"

"He said that the Pigeon had no sickness. There was nothing for Koskopog to do. The Pigeon was charmed to death because the white men were here. Koskopog says that the presence of the white men killed the bride of Delobrek."

"Koskopog lies."

"Koskopog can answer for himself. Does the Bear-Hunter, who has lived long in Alaska, know what lies in the heart of Mesouga?"

"Yes. Mesouga is a mighty chief, and a friend of the great white Omalik at Sitka. He has it in his heart to say to the white men: 'Go. There is the way to Fort Yukon. Go find the maidens who have been stolen from you, and return to the great Omalik and say to him, Mesouga is your friend. When you have presents to give, give them to Mesouga.'"

"It is false!" said the chief, fiercely. "Mesouga's heart is filled with sorrow for his young brave whose wife has been taken from him. Delobrek's wife was young. Her spirit will be young when it reaches the everlasting hunting-ground. What will she say if she looks into the heart of Mesouga and sees there that he has not the heart of an Indian? She will come in the shadows and steal Mesouga's skins. No. The spirit of the Pigeon must be Mesouga's friend, and the spirit of the white man who caused her death must be sent to be her slave. Does the Bear-Hunter understand? He must die!"

"But why must *he* die?" I asked. "I had as much to do with the Pigeon's death as he."

Mesouga's lips curled.

"Is life not sweet to the long-knife, that he wishes to lose it so soon? But let him be content. He will die soon enough. But the Bear-Hunter is known to all the Indians. To my young men he is the greatest prize. Then he shall die, to wait on the spirit of the Pigeon in the everlasting hunting-ground."

"Well," said Maxom brusquely, "do your worst, Tananah. I am not afraid to die."

Mesouga raised his hand.

"The Bear-Hunter speaks with a brave tongue. But his time is not come. Do you see the waters of the great river?"

He pointed toward the Yukon.

"In a few days it will be frozen over, and the boats of the Tananahs which are hidden on its bank will be useless. It is time the Tananahs were going home. The lodges of these warriors have been long empty. The women of the tribe are weeping for us to come home. The villages on the Tananah will not be gay until my band returns. Then the songs of victory and the joy-dance will go on. We must go now. Another party of Tananahs under Klugbat will meet us on the Yukon with Kowak girls for wives of some of our braves. The mission of Mesouga has been successful. He is ready to go home."

"Well, what of it?" asked Maxom.

"The white men and Chilcoot prisoners will go with us. I am sorry that my brother, the great chief of the Kotch-a-Kutchins, is not still with us, that he might witness the death of his white friend. But the spirit of the Kotch will meet you in the everlasting hunting-grounds, and help you make the burdens of the Pigeon light. Come. The Tananahs must go. The boats of Mesouga's warriors are over there, on the bank of the Yukon, guarded by two of his trusted braves."

He turned away and gave some orders to his men.

The business of breaking camp was begun at once, and Mesouga's tent was the first to come down. As every one of the warriors was engaged now, there being none left to stand idly about and watch us, we were all securely bound with thongs of deerskin, with our hands behind us. Our feet and legs were left free, the fear of Mesouga being not so much that we would escape as that, in an unguarded moment, we would seize a weapon, and kill him or some of his braves.

The poles which made the frames for the tents also made the sleds upon which the entire paraphernalia of the camp was drawn. Then I saw the use of all the dogs. They had, I first supposed, been used to travel all the way from the Tananah here, but that still left unexplained how they crossed the Yukon. But it was clear enough now. They had come the distance in their boats, and had brought the dogs to be used in moving their belongings to and from the river, or from one encampment to the other, as the whim seized them or as circumstances made it necessary.

The second tent in importance—it might even be said of equal importance to that of Mesouga—was Koskopog's. This was taken down, stored away, and the dogs harnessed to it. I noticed now that the outfit of each brave included a pair of snowshoes, but it was early winter yet, and the snow was not deep enough to make them a necessity.

It did not take long to transform the scene.

In an hour there was but one tent standing where there had been a hundred.

The one remaining tent was Delobrek's.

One of the reindeer sleds upon which we had arrived was standing before this tent, the noble team we had used having been replaced by four of the dirty, snapping, snarling dogs.

The ceremony of taking down this tent was to be a solemn one. It was sacred. It held the dead.

Mesouga, who passed near us, said:

"The Pigeon shall be taken to the villages of the Tananahs, and on her grave shall the Bear-Hunter be killed. It is enough."

"Quite sufficient," muttered Maxom, when he had gone.

Now a party of girls—the young brides who had been stolen from the Rats—were seen coming toward Delobrek's hut, their faces betraying the sadness they felt.

As they walked, they sang, in the language of the Rats, this song:

"The fairest of the maidens of the Rats was the Pigeon.
She became the bride of Delobrek,
The warrior of the Tananahs.
The lodge of her people was dark and sad
Because the Pigeon was gone;
But the lodge of Delobrek was glad and light
Because the Pigeon was there.
But now she is dead.
The lodges of her people and of Delobrek
Are both dark and sad.
Her spirit roams through the everlasting hunting-grounds,
Looking for Delobrek.
She finds him not,
For Delobrek is hiding his face in the snow,
That his eyes shall not see the light,
And that his spirit may see the Pigeon.
She is dead! She is dead!"

At this Delobrek came through the crowd, and lying prone before the entrance to his hut, groaned aloud, and sang these words in the bitterness of his heart:

"The heart of Delobrek is heavy;
It is broken.
When the lodges of the Tananahs are broken up,
And they are to return to their wives
In the villages on the Tananah,
They are glad; they are glad.
But there is no one there to welcome Delobrek;
Not a heart in the villages on the Tananah
That will beat at his return.
He is alone; he is alone.
But yesterday the heart of Delobrek was glad;
He had found his mate.
The Eagle and the Pigeon had met,
And they were happy; they were happy.
And the Pigeon's head rested upon the Eagle's breast;
The Eagle's strong arm protected her.
She smiled up into the Eagle's face.
Her smile is gone! Her smile is gone!"

Two of the sorrowing warrior's companions picked him up, and he stepped aside to let the girls go inside his hut. Solemnly they filed in, and no man followed them. They were there to perform the last sad offices for their companion. From within we could hear their gentle words, as they spoke to one another about the dead girl.

In perhaps half an hour they came out.

Standing before the door of the hut, they sang:

"The Pigeon has been prepared
For her long journey to the villages of the Tananahs.
Let her be brought
And placed carefully in the sled,
And carried to the boats.
Lift her tenderly,
For she is young
And we love her."

At this, Delobrek groaned aloud.

Four of his companions, led by Luk-luk, stepped into the hut and tenderly carried the dead body of the young bride out to the waiting sled.

The moment the poor girl appeared before them, the assembled Tananahs bowed their heads.

They remained thus, until the body was securely fastened to the sled.

Then Mesouga, turning to Delobrek, said:

"It is done. The heart of Mesouga is heavy for his friend. But words cannot bring back the pride of the warrior's heart. Let us take her to our villages, that her spirit may be proud when it sees that she is buried among the Tananahs."

Delobrek seated himself beside the corpse, and with a long whip, sat ready to follow the procession of Tananahs.

He and his dead bride were the only ones of the entire party who rode. The distance to the Yukon was at least two miles, but the girls disdained to ride.

Mesouga led the way, the great Shaman walking by his side.

After him, closely guarded, came Maxom, Hadleigh, myself and the four Chilcoots. The Chilcoots ambled along in about the same manner as they might if they were going to their own execution—as perhaps they were.

Straggling behind us, stretching out on either side, was the main body of the Tananahs, driving their dogs, whooping, shouting, singing, all happy at the thought of returning to their villages, their lodges and their wives.

Not all.

Prisoner as I was, bound, perhaps, to death, I could not help feeling the greatest sympathy for Delobrek.

Lonely, sad, he sat on the sled, with no companion save his dead bride.

True, he had known her but a few days.

The wooing had been the most rude I had ever known. But it was in accord with Indian customs, and the Indian heart of the girl had been filled with pride when the strongest warrior of the Tananahs had chosen her for his bride. And now she was dead!

As we trudged along, I turned to look back at the sorrowing figure on the sled.

With downcast eyes and mournful countenance the desolate warrior sat, moody and silent; motionless, too, except when he used his arm to swing the long, snakelike whip over the heads of his dogs to urge them to increase their pace.

He did not wish to be left behind—alone with his dead.

Our way led along on the south side of the river, into which Tahnag had no doubt fallen, and I fell to musing upon his probable fate.

No human being, I felt certain, could fall over that yawning cliff into that torrent and live.

I felt sorry for Tahnag. He had endeared himself to me in many ways. I felt that I had lost a valued friend.

More than that, Tahnag was sadly missed from our councils. He was an Indian. He knew the ways of the Tananahs. He could have advised us in the present crisis.

But he, too, like Delobrek's bride, was dead.

From this my thoughts wandered to Julia and Madge Marshall.

It was now reasonably certain that we should never see them again. The probability of our death was so great—the malignancy of Mesouga left no room for doubt—that, even were they safe, we could never go to find them. And the interference with our pursuit, the capture of our party, had removed all danger from the paths of the miscreants Morrow and Bryant, and they were free to work their evil will.

With these thoughts on my mind, it is no wonder that I was sad, as we marched over the snow to take the boats for the village of the Tananahs.

And I knew that Maxom felt as I did, though the heroism of his nature was such that I knew he felt more for the girls and myself than he did over his own fate. Hadleigh was entirely selfish. *He* had no sorrow that was not all his own.

When we had got near the Yukon, Mesouga halted, and turning to us with a sneer on his face, said:

"The white chief at Sitka thinks he is wise, but he is a fool. He sees the Chilcoots and the Chilkats and the Sticks (Stick Indians on the Stickeen River) beyond the mountains, and he thinks they are the Indians of Alaska. He sees one chief of the Kotch-a-Kutchins, and thinks he has spoken to the Indians of the north. It is a lie. The Tananahs are the Indians of Alaska. Their warriors are men. The other tribes are women. The war-party of the Tananahs can go upon the Yukon in a hundred boats, and no other tribe can meet them. The Tananahs can carry war upon the Rats, the Kowaks, or the Kotch-a-Kutchins, and no one is strong enough to avenge them. Mesouga's warriors can hide their boats on the banks of the Yukon, and no eye can find them. You have seen the warriors of the Tananahs. They are great. It is enough. Come."

He led the way again, and we followed him submissively.

We were compelled to clamber down short declivities, for the Yukon was below the level of the camp we had left by at least forty feet, and, instead of a gentle slope, the grade was met by a number of ragged edges, over which we climbed to another plane, several feet below.

At last the steady wash of the river was in our ears. We were near the bank.

"This way!" said Mesouga, imperatively. "This is where the warriors of the Tananahs hide their boats."

We rounded some hummocks of snow and some rocks and walked upon the low ground by the river side.

Mesouga paused—stood spellbound—rooted to the spot by surprise and horror.

Shouts of alarm and anger came from the Tananahs.

Maxom looked at me—I looked at Maxom.

What new turn was this in the affairs of the Tananahs, and how did it affect ourselves?

Not a boat could be seen. Not a sign of a canoe, badarka or any other kind of Yukon craft.

They—if there had been any, which we could not doubt—had vanished.

And, stretched out on the snow, crimsoned by the blood from wounds that had been given with a knife, lay the two Tananah warriors who had been guarding the boats until the return of Mesouga and his men.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 4.]

MYSTERIOUS MR. HOWARD.*

BY JOHN R. MUSICK.

A Thrilling Story of Missouri Border Lawlessness and Justice.

["MYSTERIOUS MR. HOWARD" was commenced in No. 40. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XXXV—*(Continued)*.

A STRANGE DENOUEMENT.

MR. GROGAN was sworn and took the stand. He stated that he was a minister of the Gospel in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was what was called a Circuit Rider.

"Do you remember the day the Standish bank was robbed?" asked Colonel Hale.

"Yes, sir."

"Where were you between three and five o'clock on that afternoon?"

"About twenty-five miles south, or, rather, a little west of south, of this town, going to my appointment to preach the Sabbath following. My appointments are far apart, and I have to travel a great distance to reach some of them."

"Were you alone on that particular afternoon?"

"No, sir.'"

"Who was with you?"

"A young man named Rathburne."

"Do you remember the kind of a horse he rode?"

"Yes, sir; a sorrel horse with a very light mane and tail."

"How long were you in this man's company?"

"I suppose it was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon when we met, and it was six before we separated."

"If you have any particular reason for knowing it was six, state that reason to the jury."

"I remember, just as we parted, glancing at my watch to see how much time I had to make it to a member of my Bear Creek charge, and that it was just six o'clock."

"Did you converse much with your travelling companion that afternoon?"

"Yes, sir. We talked nearly all the time we were together."

"On what subject?"

"Science, philosophy, and politics."

"Did Mr. Rathburne say anything about himself?"

"Yes, sir—said he had been clerking for Mr. Jordan Wells of Wellsville."

"How long since he had quit?"

"I don't remember that he told me exactly; nevertheless, he left the impression on my mind that he had very recently left his employ."

"Now, Mr. Grogan, look about the room and inform the jury if you recognize your travelling companion of that afternoon."

"There he is!" the witness immediately answered, pointing to the defendant.

"Take the witness."

Crompton, with the energy of despair, plied the witness with questions on cross-examination, to try to make him contradict himself, or shake his certainty, but all to no purpose. Seeing that he was gaining nothing, he at last said:

"That will do."

"Call your next, Colonel Hale."

"May it please the Court, we rest," said Colonel Hale.

"Have you anything in rebuttal, Mr. Crompton?"

"I believe not, your Honor."

"Gentlemen of the jury, give attention while I read the instructions."

According to the law in Missouri, the Judge read his instructions to the jury, which he had written, defining the law in this particular case. Among other things, he said they must believe the accused guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of the offense charged before they could find him guilty, defining a reasonable doubt to be a substantial doubt growing out of the evidence and not a mere suspicion of his innocence. The jury were instructed that they might consider the reflection of the dead outlaw thrown upon the wall, and the evidence of others concerning it, with the admissions of Ralls and Anglin, and if they believed there was a mistake in the identity of Ralls and Anglin, and that the dead outlaw might have been the person they saw instead of the defendant, they were to find him not guilty. In fact, the evidence and instructions of the Court were so clearly against the prosecution that Mr. Crompton offered to dismiss the case, but Colonel Hale insisted on a verdict of the jury for two reasons: First, it would be a bar to any other prosecution for the same offense; second, it would more completely vindicate the defendant in the public mind. So, without argument, the case went to the jury.

The Colonel was really a power in the law. He was the only man in the courtroom who was perfectly composed. The crowd was completely revolutionized in opinion, and as ready to carry the accused out on their shoulders as they were a few moments before to hang him. Flora could not understand what it all meant, and dread of a conviction at last clung like ice at her heart.

Like one in a dream, Horace sat gazing on her face. He was conscious of the jury retiring, of a subdued uproar for a few moments, then of the jury filing into the room again.

"Silence!" cried the court bailiff.

When order was partially restored, the clerk rose and called the names of the jurors, and each answered.

"Gentlemen, have you found a verdict?" asked the Judge.

"We have, your Honor," answered the foreman, handing him a slip of paper.

The Judge opened the paper and read.

"We, the jury, find the defendant not guilty—" that was as far as he could be heard. Wild yells and cheers drowned his voice, but tears were seen coursing down his cheeks.

"Free, free—oh, God be praised!" shrieked Flora, swooning in her lover's arms.

The scene that followed is beyond description. Some wept and some shouted and danced for joy. Horace heard not the tumult that raged about him, for he was bending over the insensible girl to whose love and devotion he owed his present liberty.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

Horace Rathburne never exactly knew how they reached the hotel. His vision was blurred, objects were dimly seen, and the voices of those about him sounded unreal and far away. He could not have told whether the sun shone or not; he was dazed, confused and could scarcely believe himself awake.

They were in the hotel; he was bending over a cot on which she had been laid. One arm supported her head, and a doctor was administering restoratives and assuring the weeping mother that she was coming "out of it." He made some remark about nervous strain and reaction. Aunt Rachel ran from hall to hall, room to room and up and down the flight of stairs, making the walls echo with her shouts:

"Th' camp-fire, git th' camp-fire—she's fainted! Where iz yer camp-fire?" until some one told her the doctor was doing all that could be done and no camphor was needed.

Mr. Wells, sitting on a curbstone mopping his florid brow with his handkerchief, was frequently heard to mutter:

"Well, it does beat all creation! I did the fellow an injustice, but Flora more than made up for my sins."

Gradually Flora regained her consciousness, and when she first opened her eyes they fell upon the faces of the two she loved most, Horace and her mother. She raised her feeble arms and placing them about the neck of each, drew them toward her, and whispered: "Is it real, or a dream?"

"It is real," he answered.

She was soon able to sit up, and, looking about asked:

"Where is papa?"

Aunt Rachel, having been at last convinced that "camp-fire" was not needed, volunteered to go and find Jordan. He was found, and, by earnest persuasions, brought into the presence of his daughter, who, taking his hands in her own, pulled him down to her, kissed his cheek, and whispered:

"Papa, Horace is innocent!"

"I know it," he answered, and turning, he grasped his former clerk's hand, and added: "Horace, I've been a blamed fool. Forgive the past, and you can be head salesman in my store, if you want the place."

"The past is forgiven, Mr. Wells, but my plans are not formed yet."

At this moment a brass band, accompanied by a thousand men and boys, shouting and yelling, was heard coming down the street. They stopped in front of the hotel and called so loudly for Horace and Flora that they were compelled to make their appearance, and the crowd cheered until all were hoarse. Horace stepped out on to the hotel veranda and thanked the people for their kindness in the expression of sympathy and joy they had demonstrated. He found himself talking with ease, even eloquently, as he warned them against hasty judgment, and advised the exercise of the law in punishing men suspected of a crime. He had no doubt but that this was the same crowd that had gathered about the jail to hang him, and thought it a good opportunity to give them a lecture. His speech surprised no one more than himself, for he had never dreamed that he possessed any ability as an orator. When Colonel Hale was called on for a speech, he declared that he was unable to say as much as the young man who had preceded him. He hoped they would remember what he had said, and always wait until both sides of a case were heard before they formed or expressed an opinion.

At last the crowd dispersed and our friends went down to dinner, where Horace was formally introduced to Arthur Westfall and General Hawley. Josiah Hunt, the man who had found the mysterious roan horse with a black ear, joined them, and declared the outcome of the trial more enjoyable than a booming fall trade.

"By the way, Arthur," he added, "if you want the best place in our store you can have it."

"My plans are not formed—" began Arthur.

"Why, my dear fellow, you have just been chosen cashier of the Hawley Bank, at thirty-five hundred per year," declared General Hawley. "No dry-goods house outside the city can pay that salary!"

Arthur looked up in surprise and asked:

"Would you really intrust me with so responsible a position?"

"I would. I do; it is all settled."

A friendship naturally sprang up between Horace and Arthur, and they were late together that night when all others had retired, each telling his own story.

"Will you be prosecuted?" Horace asked.

"Colonel Hale assures me not. Everybody will have it that I was a detective at the beginning, and joined the band to work their capture. If I should be arrested, or charged with the crime, I would be pardoned by the Governor, who knows it all."

"And this Miss Hawley, whose pretty ears you saved from the bandit's knife, and whom you fell in love with at first sight—have you proposed to her?"

"No, no!" gasped Arthur, trembling at the thought.

"Why don't you?"

"How could I dare, when she knows what I have been?"

"My dear friend, you don't realize the height and depth and strength of a woman's love. It is boundless as space, and, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. Propose, marry her, and be happy."

"Oh, if I dared! If I could only hope to win her I would be the happiest of all living men!"

"You can; you must, or you will make both yourself and her miserable," said Horace.

Next morning, Colonel Hale came to his client and said:

"Young man, you are poor and in love. Jordan Wells is rich, and, I have no doubt, will settle a handsome dower on his daughter; but you are too proud to accept that. A clerkship will give you a living, but no more. Now, I have watched you closely through the most trying ordeal one ever passed, and I noted that your coolness, judgment and sagacity will make you an excellent lawyer. I have a practice that is growing too large for me; if you will enter into the study, I will see you through, and the day you are admitted will make you a full partner. On that same day you can marry the girl whose love you can never doubt."

The whole matter was arranged then and there, and when Mr. Wells heard of it he declared:

"All right! If John says you'll make a lawyer, you will. He knows all about it."

Horace accompanied Flora Wells and her parents home, and after a day or two spent among friends and acquaintances, took the train for Starkeville to commence his studies. It is needless to say that he lost no time, and that the progress he made astonished even Colonel Hale, who had expected much of him. One day the Colonel told him that he was to accompany him on a matter of business.

They set out in a buggy, drawn by a span of fine bays, across the country to the home of George Weatherby. Mr. Weatherby lived a retired life, never read a newspaper, and had learned nothing of his nephew's saving the bank or being declared innocent of the Mark Hunt robbery. The whole aim and intent of Mr. Weatherby now was to dispose of his property, go to Virginia, seize the estate of his nephew, and hide himself.

The only weapon Colonel Hale carried with him was the registered letter taken from the train when it was robbed. The days had grown shorter and much colder, and the lawyer and student wore heavy overcoats. There had been no snow yet, but the frost of the night before lay on the blades of dead grass and fences, and the cold, icy blasts of winter swept through the barren branches of the denuded trees along the road.

When they reached the Weatherby house they found the whole place a scene of confusion. Household treasures were being boxed and got ready for shipment, and the family was to go in a day or two.

"Are you Mr. Weatherby?" asked Colonel Hale, approaching a sharp-visaged, eagle-eyed old man who stood in the yard, giving orders about the boxing of his goods.

"Yes. What ye want with me?"

"What we have to say is of a private nature."

Weatherby looked around uneasily, wondered what "th' dum fool is drivin' at," and asked them to come in the house. When they were in the sitting-room, now almost bare of furniture, Colonel Hale said:

"You have a nephew named Arthur Westfall?"

"Yes, a worthless, onnery, good-furnuthin' cuss, who stole money out o' Mark Hunt's till—"

"No; beg pardon, Mr. Weatherby. Mr. Hunt has discovered the real thief, who is now in the penitentiary for the crime. Your nephew is innocent."

"Wall, he's onnery az darnation anyway, an' run off an' no one knows where he is—"

"No; beg pardon again. He is in Starkeville."

"Wall, I hain't agoin' t' maintain him furever. He's no acount an' won't work."

"He doesn't ask aid of you, for he has an excellent position in the Hawley Bank at a princely salary."

"Then whut th' deuce ye botherin' me about him fur?"

"I wanted to ask you if your nephew is not heir to some property in Virginia?"

"No, his people war pore az church mice."

"But he had a snug little fortune of something over five hundred thousand dollars coming to him, and you were his guardian."

"Who told ye that?"

"Your lawyer, Allen Cravensford."

"It's false."

"Well, here is a copy of a letter. I have the original, the copy will serve for you," and he handed him a copy of the letter to read, which he did. He was thunderstruck, and pale as a ghost, while he trembled from head to foot. At last breaking forth in a rage, he cried:

"It's all a pack o' falsehoods."

"But, my dear sir, Mr. Cravensford has been seen; the whole matter investigated in Virginia, and now you must either sign this paper or go to the penitentiary for swindling and embezzling the property of your ward."

Mr. Weatherby raved and swore at the fates which compelled him to part with that which he believed he had "honestly stolen," but Colonel Hale was inexorable as fate. Like a bull-dog when he has once set his teeth into his victim, he clung to him with a death-grip. It resulted in his signing the paper which released all his rights in the estate of his ward, now of age.

"Now, sir, you must come with me," said the lawyer.

"Whar?"

"We will go to a notary and have this acknowledged."

"Why, what's th' use?"

"Oh, it's only a whim of mine; come on. You can either go with me or with the sheriff."

Weatherby was a coward, and the word "sheriff" sent a cold shiver through his frame. He sprang into the buggy and they drove to the village, had the paper acknowledged and attested by the notarial seal of the officer, and then the Colonel sent a telegram to some one in Virginia, and received for answer:

"All right!"

The paper was sent by registered letter, and a few weeks later Arthur was apprised of the fact that a handsome fortune awaited his order. The real estate was sold for a good round sum, and with the proceeds he bought a half-interest in the Hawley Bank, of which he was already the popular cashier.

* * * * * *

A few words more and this story will be finished. Meeker, by the influence of strong friends, got off with only ten years in the penitentiary, and died of consumption, shame and remorse before half the term was served out.

After the ineffectual effort to rob the Hawley Bank, the Missouri banditti for a long time disappeared from the State. Though Arthur received some anonymous letters threatening his life, he was never molested, and soon ceased to fear them. In time he renewed his calls at the Hawley mansion, and came to love Grace more and more, and one evening, in a fit of desperation, proposed, and was in due time accepted. They were married, and settled down to what is hoped will be a long and happy life. General Hawley has retired from business and spends his time with his grandchildren, of whom there are five, three sturdy boys and two girls, who promise to be as beautiful as their mother. Mrs. Westfall is still youthful, still handsome, the favorite of their wide circle of friends, and the idol of her husband. Sometimes, as he fondles her pretty ears, he thinks that, after all, it was well that he served an apprenticeship at train-robbing, for how else could he have saved them from the bandit's knife?

The day Horace Rathburne was admitted to practice in the courts of Missouri, Flora Wells became his wife, and he was at once admitted into full partnership with Colonel Hale. As Arthur and Horace were friends, their wives, from mutual sympathy, also became intimate. Their children grew up and became friends, until the two families were almost inseparable.

Hale & Rathburne ere long became one of the strongest legal firms in Missouri, the junior partner proving himself the equal of the senior, proving that Col. John Hale had made no mistake when he said that he was a born lawyer. The halo of romance which had hovered about the young attorney, and the general sympathy which the public feels toward one who has been greatly wronged, made him a general favorite. Mr. Wells, from having a son-in-law of whom he was ashamed, came to have a son-in-law of whom he was justly proud. As years rolled on and the popularity of young Rathburne increased, he was induced to embark in the field of politics. The Congressional district in which he lived had been represented by an old, superannuated fossil, a worn-out politician, and the people clamored for a change. Young Rathburne was named for his place, and elected by an overwhelming majority. In his new field as a statesman he bids fair to surpass himself as a lawyer.

We must not forget the old Newburg tavern and its odd proprietors. The tavern is to-day tenanted only by owls and bats, or a stray sheep that may wander thither during the hot summer days. The window panes are nearly all broken out; the shutters are off or hang by one hinge, and the old house is in the last stages of decay, while on the hill above sleep its owners and their two faithful servants. Uncle Reuben Price sat day after day in his old arm-chair, waiting for a return of business, for which he hoped to the last. One day he was silent longer

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than usual, and Aunt Rachel noticed that his pipe had fallen from his hand and his head lay on his left arm. She shook him, and was shocked to find him stiff and cold. She called loudly for help, but Uncle Reuben would wait no more for the return of Newburg's glory. The stage-horn would never make music for his ears again. Aunt Rachel followed him soon, and the faithful servants a year or two later. The forest has swallowed up the old road, and the ruin of the old tavern is all that is left to mark the place where Newburg stood.

In the spring of 1882 the whole country was shocked at a murder in St. Joseph, Missouri. Mr. Thomas Howard, his wife and two children lived quietly in a neat little cottage at No. 1318 Lafayette street. Two young men, supposed to be relatives or friends, came to live with them. Mrs. Howard was spoken of as an estimable lady, frequently seen at church and Sunday School with her children. One day, while the wife was cleaning house, the husband thought to assist her, and was standing on a chair with a feather duster, brushing a picture on the wall, when one of the young men stepped behind him and shot him through the head. The wife, who was preparing dinner, rushed in, in time to hold his head while he breathed his last. Both young men were arrested, gave their names as Bob and Charles Ford, and told the world that he whom they had slain was *Jesse W. James*, the great bandit chief of Missouri. When the house was searched an old trunk was found, among other things, with the name "F. Wells" on the end.

Mrs. Flora Rathburne read the story in the daily paper while she rocked the cradle in which her first-born slept. Gently folding the paper so as not to disturb the sleeping infant, she laid it aside and, with moistened eyes, said:

"So he was the mysterious Mr. Howard!"

THE END.

◆

THE HOUSE IS CHANGED.

BY ADA ROWENA CARNAHAN.

The house is changed, and strangers now
Go in and out the door;
And little children's pattering feet
Are heard upon the floor,
Where never sound of childish foot
Was ever heard before;
Unless 'twas in the dreams of them
That dwelt in it of yore.

The house is changed, I say, and yet
No sign of change is there:
The same old carpets press my feet;
Each well-remembered chair
Is in its place; the tables all
Their wonted aspect wear;
The pictures greet me from the walls
With faces just as fair.

And yet the house is changed; I miss
A strangely shining face—
A brow of thought—most tender eyes—
A most majestic grace—
A heart so large with sympathy
That it could find a place,
Though pure itself, of shelter for
The vilest of her race.

The house is changed, for now no more
The laugh or jest is heard;
For oh! the cheery, hearty voice
That with a tricksy word
So often, in the happy past,
Our sleeping mirth has stirred
To sudden merriment, was hushed
Like voice of wounded bird.

The house is changed, and yet, and yet
It is not changed to me:
Its blinds are shut, its doors are locked,
And memory keeps the key;
And she and I together go
Through all the rooms, and see
The vacant places filled. O, Death,
Is this thy victory?

And yet the house is changed so much
From this, where now they dwell—
The mansion not prepared with hands,
Where all the sick are well—
Where all the lame walk straight and strong
Through fields of asphodel,
And voices broken on the earth,
In perfect music swell.

◆

NOT AGAINST THE PIANO.

While it is an admitted fact that an enormous amount of time, money and strength is wasted in teaching pupils without marked musical talent to play upon the piano, it is a recently alleged discovery that piano practicing sensibly affects the nervous system, and that many cases of nervous disorder and serious illness are traceable to continuous and wearisome drumming on the piano keys. A physician has examined six thousand pupils under the age of twelve years, who have been put at piano music and compelled to practice a certain number of hours daily. He declares that twelve per cent. of these suffer from nervous troubles.

This is all very well, provided the doctor can prove that there is no other cause for the nervousness. It is scarcely to be supposed that children come to maturity without encountering any other cause for nervousness than too much attention to music. It will require much further proof than has thus far been furnished to satisfy inquiring minds that musical practice alone is responsible for the twelve per cent. of nervous child pupils.

ONE DASH---HORSES.*

BY STEPHEN CRANE,

Author of "The Black Riders," etc.

CHAPTER I.

Richardson pulled up his horse and looked back over the trail where the crimson serape of his servant flamed amid the dusk of the mesquite. The hills in the west were carved into peaks, and were painted the most profound blue. Above them the sky was of that marvelous tone of green—like still, sunshot water—which people denounce in pictures.

Jose was muffled deep in his blanket, and his great toppling sombrero was drawn low over his brow. He shadowed his master along the dimming trail in the fashion of an assassin. A cold wind of the impending night swept over the wilderness of mesquite.

"Man," said Richardson, in lame Mexican, as the servant drew near, "I want eat. I want sleep. Understand—no? Quickly! Understand?"

"Si, senor," said Jose, nodding. He stretched one arm out of his blanket and pointed a yellow finger into the gloom. "Over there, small village! Si, senor."

They rode forward again. Once the American's horse shied and breathed quiveringly at something which he saw or imagined in the darkness, and the rider drew a steady, patient rein and leaned over to speak tenderly, as if he were addressing a frightened woman. The sky had faded to white over the mountains, and the plain was a vast, pointless ocean of black.

Suddenly some low houses appeared squatting amid the bushes. The horsemen rode into a hollow until the houses rose against the somber sundown sky, and then up a small hillock, causing these habitations to sink like boats in the sea of shadow.

A beam of red fire-light fell across the trail. Richardson sat sleepily on his horse, while the servant quarreled with somebody—a mere voice in the gloom—over the price of bed and board. The houses about him were for the most part like tombs in their whiteness and silence, but there were scudding black figures that seemed interested in his arrival.

Jose came at last to the horses' heads, and the American slid stiffly from his seat. He muttered a greeting, as with his spurred feet he clicked into the adobe house that confronted him. The brown, stolid face of a woman shone in the light of a fire. He seated himself on the earthern floor and blinked drowsily at the blaze. He was aware that the woman was clinking earthenware, and hying here and everywhere in the maneuvers of the housewife. From a dark corner of the room there came the sound of two or three snores twining together.

The woman handed him a bowl of tortillas. She was a submissive creature, timid and large-eyed. She gazed at his enormous silver spurs, his large and impressive revolver, with the interest and admiration of the highly privileged cat of the adage. When he ate, she seemed transfixed off there in the gloom, her white teeth shining.

Jose entered, staggering under two Mexican saddles large enough for building sites. Richardson decided to smoke a cigarette, and then changed his mind. It would be much finer to go to sleep. His blanket hung over his left shoulder, furled into a long pipe of cloth, according to a Mexican fashion. By doffing his sombrero, unfastening his spurs and his revolver belt, he made himself ready for the slow, blissful twist into the blanket. Like a cautious man, he lay close to the wall, and all his property was very near his hand.

The mesquite brush burned long. Jose threw two gigantic wings of shadow as he flapped his blanket about him—first across his chest under his arms, and then around his neck and across his chest again; this time over his arms, with the end tossed on his right shoulder. A Mexican thus snugly enveloped can, nevertheless, free his fighting arm in a beautifully brisk way, merely shrugging his shoulder as he grabs for the weapon at his belt. (They always wear their serapes in this manner.)

The firelight smothered the rays which, streaming from a moon as large as a drumhead, were struggling at the open door. Richardson heard from the plain the fine, rhythmical trample of the hoofs of hurried horses. He went to sleep wondering who rode so fast and so late. And in the deep silence the pale rays of the moon must have prevailed against the red spears of the fire until the room was slowly flooded to its middle with a rectangle of silver light.

Richardson was awakened by the sound of a guitar. It was badly played—in this land of Mexico, from which the romance of the instrument ascends to us like a perfume. The guitar was groaning and whining like a badgered soul. A noise of scuffling feet accompanied the music. Sometimes laughter arose, and often the voices of men saying bitter things to each other, but always the guitar cried on, the treble sounding as if some one were beating iron, and the bass humming like bees.

"Hang it—they're having a dance," muttered Richardson, fretfully. He heard two men quarreling in short, sharp words, like pistol shots; they were calling each other worse names than common people know in other countries.

He wondered why the noise was so loud. Raising his head from his saddle pillow, he saw, with the help of the valiant moonbeams, a blanket hanging flat against the wall at the farther end of the room. Being of the opinion that it concealed a door, and remembering that Mexican drink made men very drunk, he pulled his revolver closer to him and prepared for sudden disaster.

Richardson was dreaming of his far and beloved North.

"Well, I would kill him, then!"

"No, you must not!"

"Yes, I will kill him! Listen! I will ask this American beast for his beautiful pistol and spurs and money and saddle, and if he will not give them—you will see!"

"But these Americans—they are a strange people. Look out, senor."

Then twenty voices took part in the discussion. They rose in quivering shrillness, as from men badly drunk.

Richardson felt the skin draw tight around his mouth, and his knee-joints turned to bread. He slowly came to a sitting posture, glaring at the motionless blanket at the far end of the room. This stiff and mechanical movement, accomplished entirely by the muscles of the wrist, must have looked like the rising of a corpse in the wan moonlight, which gave everything a hue of the grave.

My friend, take my advice and never be executed by a hangman who doesn't talk the English language. It, or anything that resembles it, is the most difficult of deaths. The tumultuous emotions of Richardson's terror destroyed that slow and careful process of thought by means of which he understood Mexican. Then he used his instinctive comprehension of the first and universal language, which is tone. Still it is disheartening not to be able to understand the detail of threats against the blood of your body.

Suddenly the clamor of voices ceased. There was a silence—a silence of decision. The blanket was flung aside, and the red light of a torch flared into the room. It was held high by a fat, round-faced Mexican, whose little, snake-like mustache was as black as his eyes, and whose eyes were black as jet. He was insane with the wild rage of a man whose liquor is dully burning at his brain. Five or six of his fellows crowded after him. The guitar, which had been thrummed doggedly during the time of the high words, now suddenly stopped.

They contemplated each other. Richardson sat very straight and still, his right hand lost in the folds of his blanket. The Mexicans jostled in the light of the torch, their eyes blinking and glittering.

The fat one posed in the manner of a grandee. Presently his hand dropped to his belt, and from his lips there spun an epithet—a hideous word which often foreshadowed knife-blows, a word peculiarly of Mexico, where people have to dig deep to find an insult that has not lost its savor.

The American did not move. He was staring at the fat Mexican with a strange fixedness of gaze, not fearful, not dauntless, not anything that could be interpreted. He simply stared.

The fat Mexican must have been disconcerted, for he continued to pose as a grandee, with more and more sublimity, until it would have been easy for him to have fallen over backward. His companions were swaying in a very drunken manner. They still blinked their little beady eyes at Richardson. Ah, well, sirs, here was a mystery. At the approach of their menacing company, why did not this American cry out and turn pale, or run, or pray them mercy? The animal merely sat still, and stared, and waited for them to begin. Well, evidently he was a great fighter; or, perhaps, he was an idiot. Indeed, this was an embarrassing situation, for who was going forward to discover whether he was a great fighter or an idiot?

To Richardson, whose nerves were tingling and twitching like live wires, and whose heart jolted inside him, this pause was a long horror; and for these men who could so frighten him there began to swell in him a fierce hatred—a hatred that made him long to be capable of fighting all of them—a hatred that made him capable of fighting all of them. A 44-caliber revolver can make a hole large enough for little boys to shoot marbles through, and there was a certain fat Mexican, with a mustache like a snake, who came extremely near to have eaten his last tomale merely because he frightened a man too much.

Jose had slept the first part of the night in his fashion, his body bunched into a heap, his legs crooked, his head touching his knees. Shadows had obscured him from the sight of the invaders. At this point he arose and began to prowl quakingly over toward Richardson, as if he meant to hide behind him.

Of a sudden the fat Mexican gave a howl of glee. Jose had come within the torch's circle of light. With roars of singular ferocity, the whole group of Mexicans pounced on the American's servant.

He shrank shuddering away from them, beseeching by every device of word and gesture. They pushed him this way and that. They beat him with their fists. They stung him with their curses. As he groveled on his knees, the fat Mexican took him by the throat, and said: "I am going to kill you!" And continually they turned their eyes to see if they were to succeed in causing the initial demonstration by the American.

Richardson looked on impassively. Under the blanket, however, his fingers were clinched as rigidly as iron upon the handle of his revolver.

Here suddenly two brilliant clashing chords from the guitar were heard, and a woman's voice, full of laughter and confidence, cried from without: "Hello! Hello! Where are you?"

The lurching company of Mexicans instantly paused and looked at the ground. One said, as he stood with his legs wide apart in order to balance himself: "It is the girls. They have come!" He screamed in answer to the question of the woman: "Here!" And without waiting he started on a pilgrimage toward the blanket-covered door. One could now hear a number of female voices giggling and chattering.

Two other Mexicans said: "Yes, it is the girls! Yes!" They also started quietly away. Even the fat Mexican's ferocity seemed to be affected. He looked uncertainly at the still immovable American. Two of his friends grasped him gayly: "Come, the girls are here! Come!" He cast another glower at Richardson.

"But this—" he began.

Laughing, his comrades hustled him toward the door. On its threshold, and holding back the blanket with one hand, he turned his yellow face, with a last challenging glare, toward the American.

Jose, bewailing his state in little sobs of utter despair and woe, crept to Richardson and huddled near his knee.

Then the cries of the Mexicans meeting the girls were heard, and the guitar burst out in joyous humming.

The moon clouded, and but a faint square of light fell through the open main door of the house. The coals of the fire were silent save for occasional sputters. Richardson did not change his position. He remained staring at the blanket which hid the strategic door in the far end. At his knees Jose was arguing, in a low, aggrieved tone, with the saints. Without the Mexicans laughed and danced, and—it would appear from the sound—drank more.

In the stillness and night Richardson sat wondering if some serpent-like Mexican was sliding toward him in the darkness, and if the first thing he knew of it would be the deadly sting of the knife. "Ssh," he whispered to Jose. He drew his revolver from under the blanket and held it on his leg.

The blanket over the door fascinated him. It was a vague form, black and unmoving. Through the opening it shielded was to come, probably, menace, death. Sometimes he thought he saw it move.

CHAPTER II.

As grim white sheets, the black and silver of coffins, all the panoply of death, affect us because of that which they hide, so this blanket, dangling before a hole in an adobe wall, was to Richardson a horrible emblem, and a horrible thing in itself. In his present mood Richardson could not have been brought to touch it with his finger.

The celebrating Mexicans occasionally howled in song. The guitarist played with speed and enthusiasm.

Richardson longed to run. But in this mystic and threatening gloom, his terror convinced him that a move on his part would be a signal for the pounce of death. Jose, crouching abjectly, occasionally mumbled. Slowly and ponderous as stars the minutes went.

Suddenly Richardson thrilled and started. His breath, for a moment, left him. In sleep his nerveless fingers had allowed his revolver to fall and clang upon the hard floor. He grapped it up hastily, and his glances swept apprehensively over the room.

A chill blue light of dawn was in the place. Every outline was slowly growing; detail was following detail. The dread blanket did not move. The riotous company had gone or become silent.

Richardson felt in his blood the effect of this cold dawn. The candor of breaking day brought his nerve. He touched Jose.

"Come," he said.

His servant lifted his lined, yellow face, and comprehended. Richardson buckled on his spurs and strode up; Jose obediently lifted the two great saddles. Richardson held two bridles and a blanket on his left arm; in his right hand he held his revolver. They sneaked toward the door.

The man who said that spurs jingled was insane. Spurs have a mellow clash—clash—clash. Walking in spurs—notably Mexican spurs—you remind yourself vaguely of a telegraphic lineman. Richardson was inexpressibly shocked when he came to walk. He sounded to himself like a pair of cymbals. He would have known of this if he had reflected; but then he was escaping, not reflecting. He made a gesture of despair, and from under the two saddles Jose tried to make one of hopeless horror. Richardson stooped, and with shaking fingers unfastened the spurs. Taking them in his left hand he picked up his revolver, and they slunk on toward the door.

On the threshold, Richardson looked back.

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In a corner he saw, watching him with large eyes, the Indian man and woman who had been his hosts. Throughout the night they had made no sign, and now they neither spoke nor moved. Yet Richardson thought he detected meek satisfaction at his departure.

The street was still and deserted. In the eastern sky there was a lemon-colored patch.

Jose had picketed the horses at the side of the house. As the two men came around the corner Richardson's animal set up a whinny of welcome. The little horse had evidently heard them coming. He stood facing them, his ears cocked forward, his eyes bright with welcome.

Richardson made a frantic gesture, but the horse, in its happiness at the appearance of its friends, whinnied with enthusiasm.

The American felt at this time that he could have strangled his well-beloved steed. Upon the threshold of safety he was being betrayed by his horse, his friend. He felt the same hate for the horse that he would have felt for a dragon. And yet, as he glanced wildly about him, he could see nothing stirring in the street nor at the doors of the tomb-like houses.

Jose had his own saddle-girth and both bridles buckled in a moment. He curled the picket ropes with a few sweeps of his arm. The fingers of Richardson, however, were shaking so that he could hardly buckle the girth. His hands were in invisible mittens. He was wondering, calculating, hoping about his horse. He knew the little animal's willingness and courage under all circumstances up to this time, but then—here it was different. Who could tell if some wretched instance of equine perversity was not about to develop. Maybe the little fellow would not feel like smoking over the plain at express speed this morning, and so he would rebel and kick and be wicked. Maybe he would be without feeling of interest, and run listlessly. All men who have had to hurry in the saddle know what it is to be on a horse which does not understand the dramatic situation. Riding a lame sheep is bliss to it. Richardson, fumbling furiously at the girth, thought of these things.

Presently he had it fastened. He swung into the saddle, and as he did so his horse made a mad jump forward. The spurs of Jose scratched and tore the flanks of his great black animal, and side by side the two horses raced down the village street. The American heard his horse breathe a quivering sigh of excitement.

Those four feet skimmed. They were as light as fairy puff balls. The houses of the village glided past in a moment, and the great, clear, silent plain appeared like a pale-blue sea of mist and wet bushes. Above the mountains the colors of the sunlight were like the first tones, the opening chords of the mighty hymn of the morning.

The American looked down at his horse. He felt in his heart the first thrill of confidence. The little animal, unurged and quite tranquil, moving his ears this way and that way with an air of interest in the scenery, was nevertheless bounding into the eye of the breaking day with the speed of a frightened antelope. Richardson, looking down, saw the long, fine reach of forelimb as steady as steel machinery. As the ground reeled past, the long, dried grasses hissed, and cactus plants were dull blurs. A wind whirled the horse's mane over its rider's bridle hand.

Jose's profile was lined against the pale sky. It was as that of a man who swims alone in an ocean. His eyes glinted like metal, fastened on some unknown point ahead of him, some mystic place of safety. Occasionally his mouth puckered in a little, unheard cry; and his legs, bended back, worked spasmodically as his spurred heels sliced the flanks of his charger.

Richardson consulted the gloom in the west for signs of a hard-riding, yelling cavalcade. He knew that whereas his friends the enemy had not attacked him when he had sat still and with apparent calmness confronted them, they would certainly take furiously after him now that he had run from them—now that he had confessed to them that he was the weaker. Their valor would grow like weeds in the spring, and upon discovering his escape they would ride forth dauntless warriors.

Sometimes he was sure he saw them. Sometimes he was sure he heard them. Continually looking backward over his shoulder, he studied the purple expanses where the night was marching away. Jose rolled and shuddered in his saddle, persistently disturbing the stride of the black horse, fretting and worrying it until the white foam flew, and the great shoulders shone like satin from the sweat.

At last, Richardson drew his horse carefully down to a walk. Jose wished to rush insanely on, but the American spoke to him sternly. As the two paced forward, side by side, Richardson's little horse thrust over his soft nose and inquired into the black's condition.

Riding with Jose was like riding with a corpse. His face resembled a cast in lead. Sometimes he swung forward and almost pitched from his seat. Richardson was too frightened himself to do anything but hate this man for his fear. Finally, he issued a mandate which nearly caused Jose's eyes to slide out of his head and fall to the ground like two silver coins.

"Ride behind me—about fifty paces."

"Senor—" stuttered the servant.

"Go!" cried the American, furiously. He glared at the other and laid his hand on his revolver. Jose looked at his master wildly. He made a piteous gesture; then slowly he fell back, watching the hard face of the American for a sign of mercy.

Richardson had resolved, in his rage, that at any rate he was going to use the eyes and ears of extreme fear to detect the approach of danger, and so he established his servant as a sort of an outpost.

As they proceeded, he was obliged to watch sharply to see that the servant did not slink forward and join him. When Jose made beseeching circles in the air with his arm, he replied by menacingly gripping his revolver.

Jose had a revolver, too; nevertheless it was very clear in his mind that the revolver was distinctly an American weapon. He had been educated in the Rio Grande country.

Richardson lost the trail once. He was recalled to it by the loud sobs of his servant.

Richardson, again looking backward, could see a slanting flare of dust on the whitening plain. He thought that he could detect small, moving figures in it.

Jose's moans and cries amounted to a university course in theology. They broke continually from his quivering lips. His spurs were as motors. They forced the black horse over the plain in great headlong leaps.

But under Richardson there was a little, insignificant rat-colored beast which was running apparently with almost as much effort as it requires for a bronze statue to stand still. As a matter of truth, the ground seemed merely something to be touched from time to time with hoofs that were as light as blown leaves. Occasionally Richardson lay back and pulled stoutly at his bridle to keep from abandoning his servant.

Jose harried at his horse's mouth, flopped around in the saddle and made his two heels beat like flails. The black ran like a horse in despair.

Crimson serapes in the distance resembled drops of blood on the great cloth of plain.

Richardson began to dream of all possible chances. Although quite a humane man, he did not once think of his servant. Jose being a Mexican, it was natural that he should be killed in Mexico; but for himself, a New Yorker—

He remembered all the tales of such races for life, and he thought them badly written.

The great black horse was growing indifferent. The jabs of Jose's spurs no longer caused him to bound forward in wild leaps of pain. Jose had at last succeeded in teaching him that spurring was to be expected, speed or no speed, and now he took the pain of it dully and stolidly, as an animal which finds that doing his best gains him no respite.

Jose was turned into a raving maniac. He bellowed and screamed, working his arms and his heels like one in a fit. He resembled a man on a sinking ship, who appeals to the ship. Richardson, too, cried madly to the black horse.

The spirit of the horse responded to these calls, and quivering and breathing heavily he made a great effort, a sort of a final rush, not for himself apparently, but because he understood that his life's sacrifice, perhaps, had been invoked by these two men who cried to him in the universal tongue. Richardson had no sense of appreciation at this time—he was too frightened—but often now he remembers a certain black horse.

From the rear could be heard a yelling, and once a shot was fired—in the air, evidently. Richardson moaned as he looked back. He kept his hand on his revolver. He tried to imagine the brief tumult of his capture—the flurry of dust from the hoofs of horses pulled suddenly to their haunches, the shrill, biting curses of the men, the ring of the shots, his own last contortion. He wondered, too, if he could not somehow manage to pelt that fat Mexican, just to cure his abominable egotism.

It was Jose, the terror-stricken, who at last discovered safety. Suddenly he gave a howl of delight and astonished his horse into a new burst of speed. They were on a little ridge at the time, and the American at the top of it saw his servant gallop down the slope and into the arms, so to speak, of a small column of horsemen in gray and silver clothes. In the dim light of the early morning they were as vague as shadows, but Richardson knew them at once for a detachment of rurales, that crack cavalry corps of the Mexican army which polices the plain so zealously, being of themselves the law and the arm of it—a fierce and swift-moving body that knows little of prevention but much of vengeance. They drew up suddenly, and the rows of great silver-trimmed sombreros bobbed in surprise.

Richardson saw Jose throw himself from his horse and begin to jabber at the leader of the party. When he arrived he found that his servant had already outlined the entire situation, and was then engaged in describing him, Richardson, as an American senor of vast wealth who was the friend of almost every governmental potentate within two hundred miles. This seemed to profoundly impress the officer. He bowed gravely to Richardson and smiled significantly at his men, who unslung their carbines.

The little ridge hid the pursuers from view, but the rapid thud of their horses' feet could be heard. Occasionally they yelled and called to each other.

Then, at last, they swept over the brow of the hill, a wild mob of almost fifty drunken horsemen. When they discerned the pale-uniformed rurales, they were sailing down the slope at top speed.

If toboggans half way down a hill should suddenly make up their minds to turn around and go back, there would be an effect somewhat like that now produced by the drunken horsemen. Richardson saw the rurales serenely swing their carbines forward, and, peculiar-minded person that he was, felt his heart leap into his throat at the prospective volley. But the officer rode forward alone.

It appeared that the man who owned the best horse in this astonished company was the fat Mexican with the snaky mustache, and, in consequence, this gentleman was quite a distance in the van. He tried to pull up, wheel his horse and scuttle back over the hill as some of his companions had done, but the officer called to him in a voice harsh with rage.

"——!" howled the officer. "This senor is my friend, the friend of my friends. Do you dare pursue him, ——? ——! ——! ——! ——!"

These lines represent terrible names, all different, used by the officer.

The fat Mexican simply groveled on his horse's neck. His face was green; it could be seen that he expected death.

The officer stormed with magnificent intensity:

"——! ——! ——!"

Finally he sprang from his saddle, and, running to the fat Mexican's side, yelled:

"Go—" and kicked the horse in the belly with all his might.

The animal gave a mighty leap into the air, and the fat Mexican, with one wretched glance at the contemplative rurales, aimed his steed for the top of the ridge. Richardson again gulped in expectation of a volley, for—it is said—this is one of the favorite methods of the rurales for disposing of objectionable people. The fat, green Mexican also evidently thought that he was to be killed while on the run, from the miserable look he cast at the troops. Nevertheless, he was allowed to vanish in a cloud of yellow dust at the ridge-top.

Jose was exultant, defiant, and, oh, bristling with courage. The black horse was drooping sadly, his nose to the ground. Richardson's little animal, with its ears bent forward, was staring at the horses of the rurales as if in an intense study. Richardson longed for speech, but he could only bend forward and pat the shining, silken shoulders. The little horse turned its head and looked back gravely.

THE END.

◆

RIGHTS OF THE LITTLE ONES.

There are many parents who have a great prejudice against locks and keys in the hands of children. By some curious process of reasoning they seem to resent anything that their children incline to keep from them.

In a conversation not long since a middle-aged lady sharply criticised some remarks made by the young mother of a growing family. This woman said that she never allowed her little ones to have any secrets from her, and never permitted them to have a key to anything.

"It cultivates secretive habits," she said, "and might make them deceitful."

The woman of experience related an incident in her early life that made quite an impression upon her hearers.

"I was," she said, "the oldest daughter of the family. My brothers were, I suppose, like all boys, boisterous, careless and rough, and when they got hold of my frail and delicate toys, there would be nothing left of them in a very short time. In my room was a little bureau, the key to which had long been lost. I had some ingenuity, and, finding an old key, I filed it and fitted it until it would turn the lock. In this bureau I put all my little treasures, and wore the key on a ribbon around my neck. For some time no one seemed to be aware that I had anything locked up, and I myself did not realize that I was committing a very grave offense in doing so.

"One day, after a visit to one of the neighbors, I went to my room, found the drawers of the bureau turned bottom upwards on my bed and the lock broken. I went down stairs with a bitter complaint against what I supposed to be the boys' intrusion, but was met by the angry face of my mother, who asked me what I meant by locking things up, and what I had secreted there that I was afraid some one would see. I think in the whole course of life I never had a greater shock. I was hurt, indignant; my sense of justice was completely outraged, and my ideas of propriety were rudely upset. I declared that there was nothing to conceal, as anybody could see who had opened the drawers. As soon as my nerves got a little steady I showed some anger, but this was nipped in the bud by a most severe punishment, and a peremptory order never, as long as I was under my mother's roof, to be guilty of a like offense. It took me a long time to understand that there are people in the world so cruelly jealous of their power over and control of their children that they cannot endure to have a thought concealed from them. I never tried to keep any of my treasures out of sight, in that house, after that—indeed, I never saved many things. It made me careless, heedless and indifferent. I had no distinct personality of my own as far as that house was concerned, and I found myself taking advantage of the affection of a lady, where I often visited, by putting in her possession the few things I cared enough for to keep. After a while this was found out and there was more trouble.

"For years I suffered from this indignity, and am sure that it has had its effect on my entire life. There is no characteristic in a child that should be so carefully treated as its sentiments about its own personal rights. Of course, these should never be permitted to encroach on the province of others; but self-respect can be maintained only when a child is allowed a certain amount of individuality, and to think its thoughts in its own way, and to feel that it has a right to something of its own. I believe that if every boy or girl, from the time it is able to go about the house, had its own room, its own property and its own responsibilities, it would develop faster, grow stronger and come to a more symmetrical and useful career than it is possible when it is perpetually irritated by the cross-purposes of common property and the feeling that what has been given it it holds only by the grace of a superior power."

◆

ONE SECRET OF GOOD SERVICE.

In England it is not at all uncommon to find persons who have been servants of the same household for their entire lifetime, succeeding their parents who were there before them. The help question is a complicated affair, and no one seems quite able to straighten it out or improve upon the present unsatisfactory service. English customs are in some respects far ahead of our own. The children are trained in certain lines, and are taught to perform their duties with promptness, cheerfulness and thoroughness. They are highly respected by their employers, because they deserve it; and proper consideration is always shown them, because they know better than to take advantage of their positions.

In this country the employee is rather apt to forget that he is paid to perform a certain service, and that in an acceptable fashion, and that a certain amount of courtesy is due to the person who employs him. He loses no opportunity to impress upon the minds of his fellow-employees that "he is just exactly as good as the boss" and does not propose to stand any nonsense. There is no current expression that is so senseless as this one, which we very often hear. It matters not whether a man is just as good as his boss, or whether he is a great deal better—often he may be; indeed, taking it for granted that he is, in many or all respects, is this any reason why he should be disrespectful, disobliging, shirky and careless? The relations of the two are not altered by the fact of equality before the law.

Each position has its peculiar duties, dignities and responsibilities. Even though the person employed has no respect for the employer, he should for his own sake, for his own self-respect, conduct himself with propriety and dignity. This can never be obtained by flippant, insolent, indifferent and unreliable service. The best helpers are those who respect themselves the most, and in doing so have due consideration for the places they occupy and the people in whose service they employ their time and talents.

◆

HOW TO GROW TALL.

There are many persons who would like very much to be taller, but it has never occurred to them that it is possible to add to their stature. Some one has been experimenting and has succeeded in growing taller by a very simple means. It is a well-understood fact that people are taller in the morning than at night. Of course, the difference is extremely trifling, but all the same, a difference exists. It seems that during the night the joints and muscles straighten out and stretch, during the day the frame settles together and the muscles contract.

The experimenter has rigged a set of pulleys and weights which he attaches by easy-fitting bands to his ankles and also under his arms. One set of weights hangs over the foot of the bed, the other from the head. He claims to have increased his stature three inches within a few years. The process he declares to be not specially conducive to comfort and restfulness, but greatly desiring to grow taller, he has not allowed the discomfort attending it to interfere. Granting that this is true, and certainly it has a scientific basis, people may grow taller according to their fancy. It might be that if children were properly looked after and framed in, in order to remove the weight from their joints, that they might be brought up to almost any stature.

There are very few people who are absolutely straight and upright. They have acquired a habit of "slumping" and allowing the body to telescope, as it were. Sometimes this comes from getting too tired, in other cases it is merely a bad habit. Whatever the cause, it should be corrected at once, if a fine figure and carriage are to be secured and maintained.

◆

THE RESOURCES OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

Over one hundred years ago, explorers announced the discovery of enormous coal fields in Newfoundland. It is already known as standing eighth among the copper-producing countries of the world. It also has extensive iron mines, and with the prod tive coal fields, assumes a great deal portance as a mining and manuf region.

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THE WAR CLOUD.

Wars and rumors of war fill the atmosphere. Where is the Peace Congress and what are arbitration committees and arbitration enthusiasts about in these troublous days? It seems strange that all of the efforts of all of the advocates of settlement by argument and on a basis of mutual concession should come to naught. There must be something in the air that inflames the passions of men and blinds them to facts which otherwise would influence their judgment and lead them to amicable discussions of important matters. That there is a crisis impending, even the most careless cannot but admit; that concessions somewhere are necessary goes without saying.

When we were small children we were taught by precept, and oftentimes by rather bitter experience, that it was a bad plan to take a stand from which we might have to back down. Humble pie is not a very relishable article of diet, and very few people enjoy it, even in small doses. When it comes to using it in quantity, it is much less acceptable.

Students of human nature who look far beyond the outward seeming of things tell us that there are forces at work in the unseen world that impel the children of men to crime and bloodshed. Whether it is as the astrologers of old used to say, the influence of the stars or the conjunction of certain planets, scientists have failed to tell, but that there are times and seasons when the spirit of war broods over the earth, no one can doubt. At intervals, more or less long, it begins its deadly work, and its passion is not gratified until thousands of human beings have died by violence.

In the church service we pray to be delivered from battle and murder and sudden death, but all the same, with these unseen and unknown causes at work, the seeds of war are slowly germinating, and will, in time, spring up into vigorous maturity. Sometimes when we sit down in quiet consideration, we might be tempted to ask ourselves how much nearer we are to civiliza[illegible] and Christianization than we were a [illegible]ry ago. While we have improved in the sciences and arts, we still are as ready for fight as ever, and a war, with modern appliances, means slaughter and death compared with which the wars of the ancients were but as playtime. Armaments that carry wholesale destruction with them are scarcely the thing for Christian nations. The dawn of peace is a long way in the future. War threatens, and half of the people on the face of the globe are at the present time either directly or indirectly affected by it.

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TAKING THE LAW IN THEIR OWN HANDS.

There may be times and circumstances when Lynch law is excusable. There may be places so remote that the law's machinery cannot be brought to bear upon a condition that demands instant attention. There are murders, unprovoked and cold-blooded; outrages upon persons and property that call for immediate retribution; and acts of violence and lawlessness that nothing but peremptory action can properly handle. Delay means increased evil, and leniency makes possible or probable the escape of the offenders. But it is only under such circumstances that a community is excusable for taking the law into its own hands. Offenses against morality or political or religious sentiments do not furnish the slightest shadow of excuse for such demonstrations.

That it is possible in what is supposed to be a civilized portion of the United States for a howling mob to shoot one person in cold blood and deliberately burn another in the presence of her ten-year-old child, is a condition of things that might lead one to wonder whether, after all, there is not something of the savage or the Turk in the make-up of some of the inhabitants of this fair land. It seems impossible that a mob of a hundred men, nearly all of them, from all accounts, American citizens and born of American parents, could be guilty of such a horror. Nothing can be said to excuse it. No theory, apology, extenuation or explanation is in order.

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PAWNBROKERS' EXTORTIONS.

For many years there have been the most grievous complaints of the extortion of pawnbrokers. As a fraternity, they are wealthy, and seem to be able to side-track most of the bills that are sent to the Legislature regulating or restraining their rapacity.

In New York City they have been rather sharply dealt with, and were, for a while, somewhat subdued; but let a pawnbroker alone for finding out a way to evade the law. When their legal charges were restricted to thirty per cent. per year, they set about finding some way to extort more money from their victims.

One of their favorite methods has been to make a charge for storage, otherwise called "hanging." The city government construed the law to mean that thirty per cent. should cover all charges; but as there was a loophole, these adroit Shylocks not only crept through it, but did so with a sort of double-somersault act and fleeced their patrons right and left. Complaints have come in so rapidly that the entire fraternity have received a most impressive warning that a repetition of their offenses will subject them to severe fines and the revocation of their licenses.

This is all very well, but those who know the pawnbrokers of New York City are willing to assert that it is only a temporary halt in their career of extortion. They will, undoubtedly, find some other means to get more than their legal interest, and will continue to flourish and violate the law as long as they live and have licenses.

They resent with the utmost bitterness any attempt to provide a way for the poor to get fair treatment. They made every effort to throw discredit upon and prevent the successful management of the Provident Loan Society. In this they would have succeeded but for the fact that at the moment public feeling was running high against their extortions.

It is a most excellent thing that the Mayor of New York has determined to put a stop to their greedy and unjust performances, and every good citizen will wish him God-speed in the undertaking,

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TELEPHONE WEATHER SERVICE.

A new feature of the telephone and telegraph service is the furnishing of information as regards the weather, upon request. Every subscriber may receive regular notice of important coming changes in the weather, or may be supplied with this information when he desires it. The public service will also answer questions at any of their stations. This is an important item, as it is frequently the case that business or pleasure may be undertaken or postponed according to the weather.

HUSBAND AND WIFE READING TOGETHER.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

Fitting it is to see them thus
  Associate in their reading,
She from his mind, he from her heart,
  So fully, tenderly feeding.
No matter whether prose or verse,
  The subject high or lowly,
The husband and the wife are in
  Communion true and holy.

His masculine intelligence,
  Direct through mazes going,
Binds closer to his own her thought—
  Truth widely great gates throwing.
Affectionate as feminine,
  Her insight to him renders
The heaven that centers earthly fact,
  And so gives the crown-splendor.

Most beautiful and most divine!
  Eden's own God is shedding
For evermore star-proofs that show
  The glorious, loved necessity
  Of man and woman's wedding.

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A LETTER FROM MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

We take great pleasure in sharing with our readers the following letter, received from our old friend and contributor, Mrs. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH, and we publish it just as she sends it, as we think many thousands of her admirers will be gratified to read her opinion of the *Ledger*, as it appears to-day.

PROSPECT COTTAGE,
December 19th, 1895.

Messrs. Robert Bonner's Sons:

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS: Your kind letter enclosing cheque for Miss ——— ———'s illustrated poem came yesterday, and made several people happy. I was made as happy as if some good fortune had come to myself, for I could realize and sympathize with the joyful *surprise* of the young writer. I have never seen her, but from all I hear from the kind old lady who brought her to my notice, she is entirely separated from all literary people—knows nothing about them. She writes from impulse, and has never presumed to send any of her productions to any publisher. Miss ——— (the old lady in question) came to spend the evening with me and a party of friends on Friday. She brought the poem with her, and told me all about it. When your letter and cheque came it was a joyful surprise to me. What must it be to the young girl? She will think she has been raised to the peerage—at Christmas, too!

Dear friends, I have been wanting to write to you for a month past—ever since the Thanksgiving *Ledger*, indeed. I have been waiting and hoping to be able to write with a *pen*. But when I wrote those few lines that accompanied the illustrated poem, I was so tired that I could not get over it for some time. I wanted to write to you about the admirable Thanksgiving Number, especially of the story and the illustration that accompanied it on the first page. The story was charming; the illustration of that story was beyond praise. Don't you *know* it was yourself? I have not seen such art-work in any magazine or paper, American, English or French. I have taken up that picture of the Thanksgiving dinner and studied it again and again with more and more pleasure. Every face there was a surprising triumph of art—the sweet-faced old ladies both wearing smiles of contentment and enjoyment—and the innocent, hungry, oh, yes, and greedy face of the dear little boy, with his round, eager eyes, and—the most artistic and the least pleasant face of the old maid, with its envious, invidious expression. And little Patty's benevolent *haste and delight in serving*. The story itself was perfect, and the picture more than perfect, if such a thing *could* be possible. You have several excellent artists on the *Ledger*. The one I am writing of seems to me to be at the head of the ladder. The Christmas Number is also very rich, full of good things—judging by the table of contents, for I have not had time to look at more than that and the pictures. And they all whet the mental appetite, like the smell of the Christmas dinner does the bodily. I shall sit down to enjoy it as soon as I can with a free mind.

I think it is very fine. But, *indeed*, I think the Thanksgiving Number was the finest I ever saw. I admire that artist of yours. I do not know his name, or who he is; but, oh! he *is* a genius. If he is not of world-wide fame *now*, he is sure to become so. I have taken up that Thanksgiving picture and gazed at it with enjoyment.

I wanted to say all this to you before—(indeed, I was always saying it to you in my thoughts.) But I was—was waiting and hoping to get over this collapse of weakness and get strong enough to sit at a desk or table and use pen and ink.

But I do not seem to get stronger, and I suppose I might have waited and hoped and done nothing else until doomsday, if circumstances had not arisen to make it necessary for me to "take pen in hand" (as the old folks used to say) in the service of a diffident young writer, to send you her work and afterwards to acknowledge the letter and cheque, that I know must have made her so happy.

As soon as that letter and cheque came, which, *indeed, surprised* as well as delighted us (for it is almost unprecedented for the first little piping cry of a young poetess who has just chipped her shell to be listened to), my daughter-in-law Blanche, scarcely waiting to tie her bonnet strings, flew off on the wings of the wind to carry what I hope may be called without irreverence "*Glad tidings of great joy*" to the young girl and her aged friend. The old lady was only on a visit to the city, and when Blanche called she was out making farewell calls before returning to her home in Richmond. Blanche left the letter and cheque for Miss ———, for she did not know the address of Miss ——— ———.

When we hear, I will write and tell you.

Now, dears, wishing you all a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year, I am, as always,

Your loving friend,
E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

PUBLIC SPEAKING.

Some one writes to us that he is studying at a law school; that, besides knowledge of law, he is desirous of attaining the art of oratory, and he asks that we will give him such advice as our experience may suggest.

We can hardly hope to be of much service to the inquirer. We do not know his temperament, his disposition, his attainments, his habits, all of which would modify any instructions likely to be of benefit. It is personal and peculiar advice that each man needs, and that must be given by some one who knows the circumstances of the applicant.

Some general hints applicable to all young aspirants for public speaking may answer a good end.

1. The earlier one begins to practice public speaking the better. For although the gift, in point of fact, develops late in life, it is only in the case of those who have a strong, though it may be dormant, talent for it. No man has learned any art until he can practice it spontaneously, without conscious volition. If this proves true in music, in drawing, in the dance, or graceful posturing, it is even more apparent in oratory. Parents and teachers should encourage children to narrate, to converse—for story-telling and fluent conversation are essentially of the same nature as oratory.

2. The habit of *thinking on one's feet* is invaluable. Great orations may be prepared with elaboration and study, not alone in their substance, but in form. Such we know to have been the preparation of orations which continue to be read from age to age.

But for the purposes of American life, one must be qualified to speak well without laborious preparation of language, and this only can be done when one can command his thoughts in the face of an audience. The faculty of doing this is greatly helped by early and persistent practice. Aspirants for oratorical honors, without neglecting the severe preparation of the study for special occasions, should lose no opportunity of speaking *off hand*. One should not be downcast at failures. They are often far better for the student than successes. He who goes to school to his mistakes, will always have a good schoolmaster, and will not be likely to become either idle or conceited.

3. Public speaking *means business*, or ought to. Although there is a great deal of fancy talking, after-dinner speeches, complimentary speeches, and religious exhortations, all of which are meant to fill up time, yet public speaking, in its nobler aspect, is an attempt to gain some definite and important end by the use of reasons and persuasions. When a man seeks his neighbor for a business conversation, he knows just what he wants, and he settles with himself by what method he will get it. This is the very genius of a good preparation for a speech, to know definitely what you wish to gain of an audience, and the means by which you propose to secure it. All true oratory is practical psychology.

4. A man may speak deliberately or even slowly, but no man can succeed who speaks hesitatingly—who goes back on a sentence and begins again. Such a speech is like a shying horse or a balking mule. At all hazards, the young speaker must learn to push on—to keep a current moving from beginning to end of his address. If you drop a stitch, don't stop to take it up. If you stumble on a word, let it go. Don't go back to it. Keep right on, no matter what happens, to the end. Momentum is of more value than verbal accuracy. Of course, the best speech is that which is full of good substance, expressed by the best language and fluently uttered. But while one is learning, he should never let himself be tripped up by a word, or the want of one. Jump the gap—run over the mistake. Keep right on. It will be time enough the next endeavor to profit by the experience of mistakes.

5. If one is slow of thought, dull of feeling, very cautious and secretive in nature, without that talent of combativeness which tends to project one's mind upon another's, or if one be excessively sensitive, so that a mistake gashes like a lancet, it is not likely that he will succeed as a public speaker.

But one may as well stop here as anywhere. The theme opens like an endless prairie. Perhaps somebody will ask for light on some special point, and retrench this immense *generality*.

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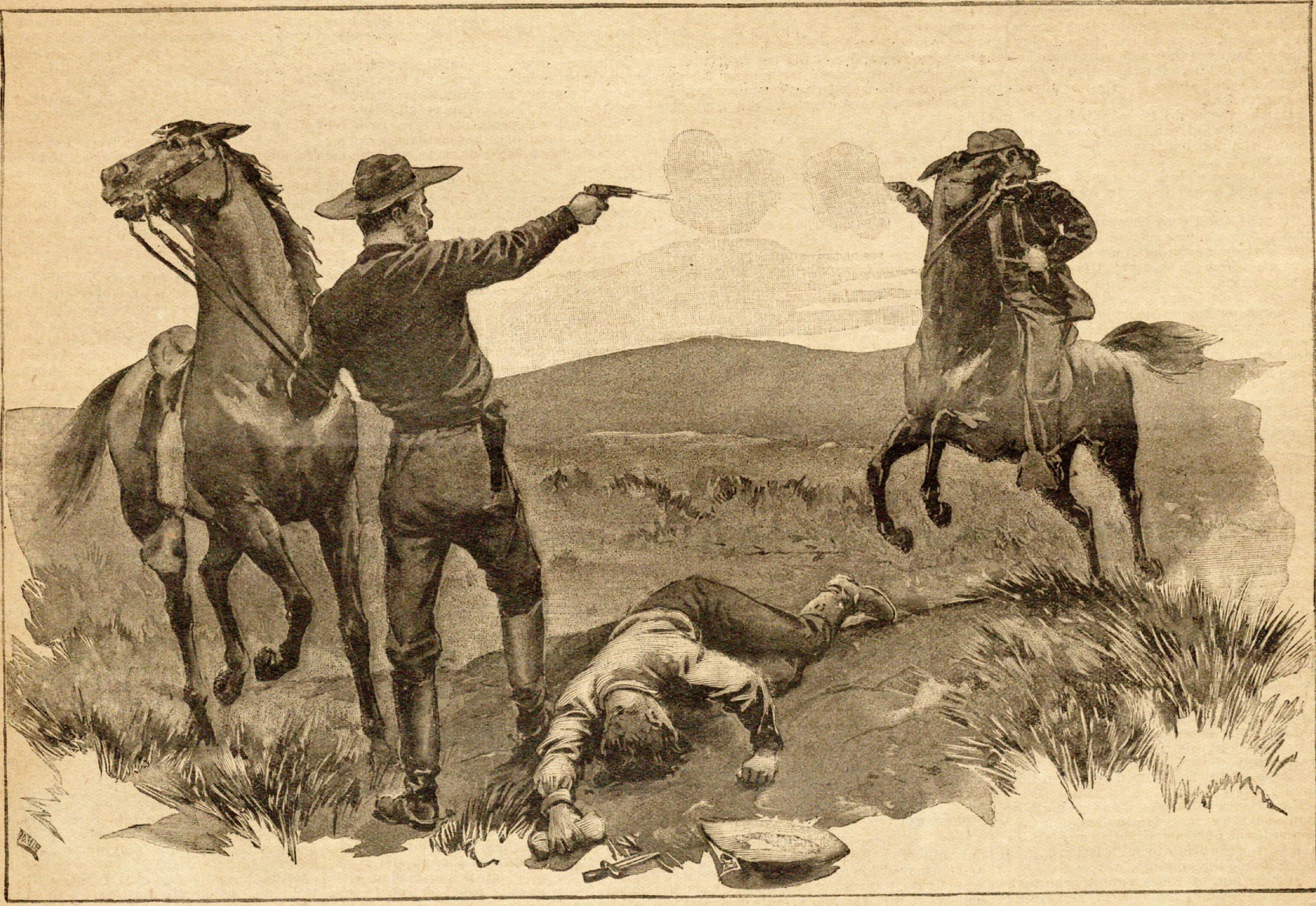
NOTICE TO OLD SUBSCRIBERS.

Watch the yellow label on the wrapper of your *Ledger*, as the date printed on it indicates the time your subscription expires. We will discontinue sending the *Ledger* at the expiration of your subscription. If you renew promptly you will not only insure your *Ledger* coming to you every week without delay, but it will be a great convenience and assistance to the publishers of the *Ledger* in keeping their subscription list.



THEY BOTH RAISED THEIR PISTOLS SIMULTANEOUSLY AND TWO SHOTS RANG OUT.

IN SEARCH OF GOLD.*

BY COLIN MIDDLETON,

Author of "The Fool of Destiny," "Innes of Blairavon," etc.

["In Search of Gold" was commenced in No. 52. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS.

[In order that *new* readers of the *Ledger* may begin with the following installment of this story, and understand it just the same as though they had read it all from the beginning, we here give a synopsis of that portion of it which has already been published: Ivor Gwynne and Gwendolen Llewellyn have grown up under the same roof, though they are not related. Left destitute at the age of six by the death of his father (his mother having died in giving him birth), Ivor had been taken to Mr. Llewellyn's home, called Glanwythian, near the river Usk, in England. Ivor's uncle, Richard Gwynne, had provided for his education, but now, having finished his last term at Cambridge, his uncle disowns him, on the pretext that he had not sufficiently improved his opportunities at the university, and places 250 pounds at his disposal. Ivor and Gwendolen are as yet not fully conscious of the fact that they have fallen in love with each other, and Ivor determines to seek his fortune in the diamond fields of South Africa, and starts for Kimberley. On the steamer he meets a college acquaintance named Beausire. There is a young Jew aboard who bears so close a resemblance to Ivor that but for the shifty and insincere expression of his eyes it would be impossible to distinguish the one from the other. He introduces himself to Ivor as Moses Löwe, diamond merchant, and volunteers information about the diamond fields, displaying an unusual familiarity with the gambling features of share-broking. There are also two Jewish ladies, with whom Löwe seems very intimate. At Cape Town, Löwe and the ladies go direct to Kimberley, while Ivor and Beausire remain to see the town. Strolling down to the pier one day, Ivor is astonished to see the two ladies on the deck of a steamer just leaving for England, and when they see him they try to hide from him. On the following day Ivor starts for Kimberley, leaving Beausire behind. On the train he learns that detectives are looking for Löwe. When Ivor steps off the train he is mistaken for Löwe and arrested on the charge of murder. It appears that Löwe had waylaid, shot and robbed an official of the Kimberley mines who was known to carry a large quantity of diamonds, and that before the only witness to the crime could come up he had mounted his victim's horse and escaped. With the help of the two ladies—his sisters—Löwe had so timed his movements with those of Ivor that the latter should be arrested as the criminal. The witness of the crime recognizes Ivor as the murderer and other witnesses identify him as Löwe. Unable to establish his identity, Ivor is convicted and sentenced to death. On the day set for his execution his innocence is proven by the appearance of Beausire and the news that Löwe had been seen in the Transvaal. Ivor and Beausire prepare to leave Kimberley.]

CHAPTER IX.

THE CRIMINAL'S ESCAPE.

FOR a few moments let us leave Ivor and Beausire to make their preparations for their second migration, and let us follow Löwe in his flight from the Floors.

At first he put spurs to the horse he had stolen, and galloped at full speed, until he had put five miles or more between himself and his possible pursuers. So long as the short twilight held he glanced back from time to time to assure himself that he had no followers. When the darkness shut down over the land he dismounted at intervals and laid his ear to the ground to catch the beat of advancing hoofs. Convinced after a time that no one was on his track, he veered westward, and slackened his pace.

He knew the ground well, and had made his plans beforehand.

As he rode along he could not banish from his mind the thought that the unwelcome witness of the crime might possibly have seen his face. He thought that he had screened it with his arm when he attempted to cover the old man with his pistol. Pity he didn't kill him, too. No, perhaps it was as well, after all. He had not intended to kill the mine official if he made no resistance, but the circumstances of the case had compelled him to resort to desperate measures.

It was worth it. As he told himself this, he hugged the bag of diamonds, which was stowed away in the breast of his coat. He had done with South Africa forever.

When he felt that he was safe under cover of the night, he veered still more to the westward. His plan was to cross the Vaal as soon as possible, work up through Griqualand West into Bechuanaland, and then, after his beard had grown, and the matter had blown over to a certain extent, to cross back again into the Transvaal and work down to the cost and ship to England on a French or German vessel. The plan was simplicity itself, and nothing was easier to hide himself in that vast country, especially as he was going where communication was slow and where a wandering stranger was more common than not.

He had taken care to provide himself with sufficient ready money for all emergencies.

He rode on with a light heart; a mere murder was not calculated to damp his spirits. He had gained his end, and that was everything. The means by which that end had been gained, having served, might well be forgotten.

He rode on and on, until the night began to grow gray, and soon the dawn flushed up from out of the violet east, and he was within half a mile of the river.

He swam his horse across it, and then, having put a river between himself and pursuit, he felt absolutely secure. He rode on some few miles and then dismounted. He hobbled the horse as best he might with the bridle, and lay down beneath a mimosa shrub and was soon asleep.

It was midday when he awoke, and, having caught his horse, he mounted and rode on at a brisk canter. From his wide experience of events of this sort, he knew that his pursuers would go east, expecting that he would make for the sea, and with any luck this fellow Gwynne would have been arrested and condemned and probably hanged by the time that he would be on his way to the coast.

"What a godsend that fellow has been!" he thought. Without his appearance on the ship, it might have taken him weeks, or even months, to evolve a scheme which would not fail, and yet which would not leave the burden of suspicion resting on his own shoulders.

He little knew, however, that the Judge, willing, in the interests of justice, to give Ivor the benefit of the doubt as to his identity—though firmly believing him to be Löwe in his own mind—had given orders that the search for another Löwe should not cease until sentence had been actually carried out on the condemned man.

For a fortnight he wandered about, having passed up through Griqualand West into Bechuanaland. After he had been a week out he exchanged his horse at a farm, not without haggling, in which he got the better of his opponent. His beard had already assumed quite a respectable scrubbiness, and he was at peace with all the world.

He slept at farmhouses or in the open, as circumstances demanded, and a sense of complete security gradually took possession of him. He had taken the precaution of changing his clothes for a coarse woolen shirt and a pair of rough riding-breeches.

His original intention was to allow six full weeks to pass before he should show himself in more civilized parts. By that time Gwynne would have been hanged and the whole matter would have blown over.

But, curiously enough, a sense of loneliness—which is inseparable from life outside the town in the African continent—came over him. He had not dared do more than come late in the evening to any farmhouse, nor stay late in the morning, nor did he go in anything like a straight line. He had dodged about from place to place, and had invariably started in the morning in exactly the opposite direction to that which he intended to pursue during the day. After he had ridden out of sight of the farmhouse, he had by a wide *détour* reached the line which he meant to follow.

There was nothing easier in the world than to baffle pursuers on this vast continent.

After he had been out a little more than a fortnight, he was lying one night in the open, unable to sleep. Above him was the deep blue tropical sky, spangled with the myriad eyes of God.

Perhaps the influence of the great sky it was that brought tender thoughts to his heart, for an intense *sehnsucht** came over him for England—not for his native land—that had no soft memories for him. He had been born in the Judengasse in Cologne, and had no recollection of his early youth save squalor and misery.

In the Jewish quarter in London he had soon managed to lift his head above the waters of struggling poverty which surrounded him, and by those arts of cunning innate in the Hebrew race had won for himself an independence at an early stage in his career.

It was the soft brown eyes of Rachel Hirschbaum which occupied his thoughts, and he rolled about on the ground in a frenzy at the thought that perhaps in his absence some other suitor was paying her his court. Visions of long happiness rose before him, and hours before the crimson birth of the sun he had caught his horse and was galloping away due east. At that time he was about a hundred miles north of Vryburg, and after he had ridden some miles he altered his course to south-east, with the intention of striking the Vaal about Klerksdorp.

As before, he dodged about from farmhouse to farmhouse, and it was some time before he crossed into the Transvaal. Then

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* Yearning.

he doubled his measures of caution. The night after he came into the Transvaal he had a vague, uneasy feeling that he was being tracked. Two or three times during the day he had seen the same horseman before and behind him. On the following day he had no doubt about it. He was obviously being tracked.

During the night he mounted again and rode northward, and in the morning he found that he had eluded his pursuer—if such he were.

About nine o'clock he turned southward again, and hoped to be in Klerksdorp by dusk.

He rode quietly all through the day, and just as the sun was getting low down on to the horizon he found himself only about five miles from Klerksdorp. His spirits rose, and he shook his horse into a gallop, when, happening to turn round slightly, he saw the same horseman who had dogged him for the two previous days not more than half a mile away, and scarcely a quarter of a mile farther from Klerksdorp, in a direct line, than he was.

His mind was made up in an instant. The night was falling. He would ride for it and trust to luck to evade his pursuer in the darkness which would soon shut down. His horse had been going easily all day, and was a fast, strong animal.

He put his hand involuntarily to his right side to make sure that the bag of diamonds which he had sewn into his coarse shirt was safe, felt for his revolver, clapped spurs to his horse and sat down to ride.

The horse responded to its master's call for an effort, and Löwe saw that his pursuer was not gaining on him. In ten minutes it would be dark enough to evade him in some way or other, and in the night he would make his way into Klerksdorp on foot.

The horse's hoofs thundered over the ground, and Löwe laughed to himself as he felt that his horse was going well, and that he was not losing ground. He rode hard for over two miles, and had just turned round to get a glimpse of his pursuer, when his horse put his foot in an ant-heap and came down, pitching his rider on to his head ten yards away.

The horse rose and limped away, but Löwe lay like a log.

His pursuer galloped up, and seeing Löwe lying on the ground motionless, he gave a hoarse laugh of triumph, pulled up his horse, and taking the bridle over his left arm, knelt down beside the prostrate man.

He was one of those vermin who make their livelihood by robbing of their earnings the wretched Kaffirs who have finished their time at the diamond fields, and who are on the way homeward with the little fortune which should buy them wives and cattle and the good things of life.

He had heard of Löwe's escapade; knew him by sight; and knew, moreover, that he would not be such a fool as to return to Kimberley.

The papers had told him that Löwe had headed for the Transvaal, and he had roamed about on the chance—which he allowed to himself was very slight—of coming across him.

Fortune had favored him in an astonishing manner, and he laughed with delight as he saw his prey harmless and within his grasp.

So far as he was concerned, this was a perfectly safe robbery, for the person robbed was in no way likely to give information of the fact.

He felt Löwe's shirt for the diamonds, and muttered an oath when he found them sewn in. He laid Löwe flat on his back, and took out his knife to rip open the shirt.

He put his blade between his teeth to open it, when he suddenly stopped, uttered a curse, and turned round as though he were listening.

At this moment Löwe opened his eyes in a dazed way, and looking at his antagonist, whose head was turned away, seemed to grasp the situation at once.

The robber still seemed to be listening, with a doubtful expression on his face.

Soon he turned round again and opened the knife.

As soon as he turned round Löwe closed his eyes again. His enemy gave one rip at the shirt, and then, with another muttered imprecation, turned away again. He dropped his knife and put his head to the ground, and Löwe had time to grasp his pistol.

The robber raised his head from the ground, and having now made himself certain that he had heard the sound of approaching horses' hoofs, turned quickly, and putting his hand into the rent he had made, he gripped the bag of diamonds, and ripped the whole thing away bodily, and as he did so, Löwe, as quick as lightning, raised his pistol and shot him through the heart.

The horse, accustomed to firearms, gave one start backwards, and then stood.

Löwe raised himself from the ground, feeling very sore after his fall, and took the horse's bridle from off its master's arm and put his own through it. He then knelt down to get the diamonds, but the dead man held them with a grip of iron, and, try as he would, Löwe could not disengage the fingers. He, in his turn, cursed like the foul fiend himself, when suddenly he espied the knife. He at once began to hack at the dead man's fingers, when his attention was arrested by the same sound which had cost his adversary his life.

Looking up, he saw, scarcely fifty yards from him, a mounted man.

Löwe rose instantly and grasped his pistol. There was no time to mount. He must trust to his nerve and his eye. He had the advantage, for he was steady on his feet, and could take a surer aim. One murder more or less did not matter to him now. His hands were dyed with blood, in any case. As the horseman drew nearer, Löwe saw the well-known features of a Kimberley detective. When he was about seven yards away they both raised their pistols simultaneously, and two shots rang out.

Löwe felt a sharp twinge in his right ear, the lobe of which had been shot away, and at the same moment his adversary's horse pitched heavily forward and fell right on to the top of the man who was lying dead on the ground. The detective's horse had thrown up its head suddenly on being checked, and Löwe's bullet had found its billet in the poor beast's brain, while the detective was thrown far over its head, and lay motionless some dozen yards away.

A shout from his right made Löwe turn, and he saw two more horsemen pressing on toward him. He looked at the detective, who had not yet moved, and then at the horse lying so as to entirely cover his first victim. There was no time for anything if he was to save his own skin. The diamonds were lost to him, and there was nothing for it but to mount and make the most of his escape.

He mounted quickly and rode away at full gallop into the gray night.

It was months before he had the courage to show himself again in the neighborhood civilization.

He finally reached Durban and took ship on a French vessel. With two murders scored up against him, he dared not return to England. He saw in the *Natal Press* that a reward of one hundred pounds was offered for his apprehension, and he also discovered that his exact description had been forwarded to the English authorities at Scotland Yard. When he found himself at last on board ship, a reaction from the terrible nerve strain which he had undergone set in, and he was landed at Aden in a state of collapse.

He recovered, and took a passage on board a North German Lloyd steamer for Bombay.

CHAPTER X.

PREPARATIONS FOR A SECOND FLITTING.

Ivor and Beausire left Kimberley on the day following their dinner with the Judge, and journeyed down to Cape Town. Ivor had scarcely seen anything of Kimberley, as he had spent all his time in prison or in the hotels. An unreasoning prejudice against him seemed to be inspired in everybody's mind. The landlady of the hotel hoped that he did not intend making a long stay; in the street men eyed him with distrust, and edged out of his way.

Despite this fact, Ivor could not suppress a feeling of regret at having to leave this mushroom town of brick and galvanized iron—on which, literally, all his hopes had centered three short months ago. His money was fast disappearing. By the time they landed in Australia he would not have more than fifty pounds with which to start the world.

He had been at pains to dissuade Beausire from accompanying him; but it was of no avail. Moreover, he now felt that he was under an obligation to him of such magnitude that he must submit rather than advise.

He knew—none better—that Beausire was worse than useless for the life which they were about to lead. He would much have liked to tell him so, but it is hard to insult a man who has virtually saved your life. Beausire was one of those men, good-hearted enough, who, unless born with a silver spoon in their mouths, are bound to fail, for they have never had the opportunity of acquiring those qualities which command success. He was determined to follow Ivor's fortunes, and promised to be a hindrance more than anything else.

As Ivor had expected, his shooting expedition had prolonged itself much over the allotted three weeks, and even then Beausire had no intention of going straight to Kimberley. He had written down to the Cape to have his baggage, which he had left there, forwarded on to Kimberley, and had asked the manager to forward any letters on to Hopetown, where he would join the train.

The manager of the International sent Ivor's telegram on to Hopetown, with the request that it might be conveyed to Prieska, from which place Beausire had written, on the chance that Ivor's story might have some foundation of truth in it. Having thus satisfied his conscience, he forgot the matter entirely. Ivor's telegram reached Beausire just as he was on the point of starting for a short shooting expedition, and after much explanation and searchings, a paper was brought to him with the account of the trial and the day of execution.

Finding that if he went to Hopetown and thence by train, he would be too late, he hired a horse and rode into Kimberley just in time, as we have seen, to assist in confirming the evidence of Ivor's *alibi*.

The manager of the International Hotel was not a little surprised when Ivor and Beausire walked into the hotel, and he made haste to apologize to Ivor for his unwitting mistake.

Ivor had taken the precaution to obtain from the Kimberley Judge a paper certifying that he was Ivor Gwynne, and not Löwe, and this he produced with a laugh and—

"All's well that ends well."

They found that they could get a boat bound for Australia in a week, and they took their passage and bought the few necessaries they required.

Ivor had previously bought one of those belts for carrying sovereigns which are so common among "new chums" in Australia, and of which they are so proud. He now had it fitted with cases for carrying revolver cartridges, and had his leathern revolver case sewn on to the belt, so as to form one piece.

He consequently carried round his waist all his possessions—at any rate, all which were of any value to him.

Beausire did the same, and they felt themselves ready for all emergencies.

A day or two before they started Ivor was surprised and delighted to find a letter for him from Gwen. After his release from prison he had demanded and received the two letters which he had intrusted to the chaplain. He had read them over, and he blushed with shame at his own eloquence and tore hers up. Things looked so different now that he was free again. Not that his feelings toward her were altered in any way, but now that his life was before him, he realized the fact that it was, perhaps, scarcely honorable for a man in his position—with no money, and at present no prospects—to offer his love to a girl who was, or, at any rate, would be, an heiress.

Her letter, which had been written immediately on the receipt of his, showed as plainly as did his the meaning which lay underneath the words, and yet neither of the recipients dared or cared to allow themselves to believe what the other so plainly meant to convey.

Gwen was full of solicitude for Ivor's safety and comfort; hoped "that Kimberley was healthy, and that he was already on the high-road to fortune." Ivor smiled grimly to himself as he read this. He had been on the high-road to death, and had escaped it by a mere chance. "Her father was not at all well; had been ailing, in fact, almost since Ivor had left, and she was getting anxious about him. She was delighted to get Ivor's letter, and hoped that it would not be long before he wrote again. She had to hurry to catch the mail (no mere form of words on this occasion), and she remained ever his affectionate friend—Gwendolen Llewellyn." So said the letter; but between the lines, had he chosen to read, he might have seen as plainly as though the words were written with mere ink instead of with Gwen's heart-blood: "Ivor! oh, Ivor! come back to me!"

Ivor wrote a long letter to her in the stereotyped manner of former years—not like that first letter which he had sent to her on his arrival in South Africa. The letter which he had written in prison had frightened him. He must be cautious now.

He gave her a detailed account of his imprisonment and release, and told her of his journey to Australia, and that she must address any letter to him at the Post Office in Melbourne until he should write to her from there, that she might expect another letter from him in five or—at the most—six weeks after the receipt of that which he was now writing.

On the night before they started for Australia Ivor and Beausire were sitting on the veranda of the hotel, smoking their pipes.

After blowing rings for a time, Beausire opened the conversation.

"Have you any definite plans when you get to Australia, Ivor ?"

"I can't say I have. My ideas on Australia are about as hazy as they were on the subject of Africa."

Beausire laughed, took his pipe out of his mouth, and said:

"It strikes me, old man, that we are about as innocent a pair of lambs as ever came out to be shorn."

"I have come to that conclusion many times since I arrived. I had lots of opportunity for thought in prison."

"By gad, yes! I call it an infernal shame that we don't know more about our colonies than we do. A feller hasn't a chance unless he knows the ropes. One of those poets—Tennyson, isn't it?—says, 'What do they know of England, who only England know?' and I think he just hit the nail on the head."

Ivor smiled as he answered:

"I don't think it was Tennyson, was it ?"

"It don't matter who wrote it; it is true, anyhow, and that is the great thing. I for one shall be jolly glad to get out of this place; it's a darned sight too hot for me, and up at Kimberley there every one seemed to be in such an infernal hurry—to make money, I suppose."

"I expect we shall have to bustle up a bit in Australia if we want to do anything."

"Anyhow, it won't be so hot. When I was out with those fellers shooting, I was deuced near grilled alive. By gad, Ivor, it was a deuced lucky thing that I thought of sending down for letters and things. You would have been up aloft by this time if I hadn't."

Ivor didn't say anything, but he sighed softly and smiled.

"If it hadn't been," continued Beausire, "that I had a sort of feeling that the governor might relent a bit and send me another hundred or so I should not have done it. No such luck, however. Our joint capital won't amount to much when we do land."

"No, it won't; but it doesn't matter much in Australia. Labor is dear there still, and we can always get work if our gold-digging doesn't turn out all right."

"Thanks. I am not taking much stable work or sheep-shearing if I can help it."

"Well, Beausire, I must warn you again. You can't expect to make a fortune by doing nothing, and unless you are prepared to work, you had much better not come."

"Oh, I'll do all right. Don't you bother about me. I daresay the fact that I am my father's son will help me a bit."

"I doubt it. It will be rather against you than otherwise in the sort of work we are going to do."

"Well, well, Ivor, don't fret. I shan't be in your way, whatever happens. If I find I can't cotton to the work, or can't make money, I'll clear out."

Ivor sighed involuntarily, foreseeing how hopelessly unfit Beausire was for the sort of life which lay in front of them.

"Where are we going, anyhow ?" said Beausire.

"Well, this ship takes us to Melbourne, calling at Adelaide. We might either get out at Adelaide and go up Broken Hill way, or go on to Melbourne and up to some of the old Victoria workings. I was reading a book the other day by a fellow who seemed to know what he was talking about, in which he said that he felt sure that a lot of those old workings north of Castlemaine were abandoned at the wrong time, that there was money to be made, and plenty of it. Still, I feel rather inclined to go there."

"All right, my son, it's all the same to me—Victoria, New South Wales, or Western Australia. So long as we get into gold I don't care."

"But, remember, I know absolutely nothing about it. I am only going by what this man says, and I don't want to drag you up there, or anywhere else, unless you want to go yourself."

"Fire ahead, Ivor; I am with you. I am like Ruth—'Where thou goest, I will go.' Do you know that you are a devilish good chap, and you are not going to get rid of me in a hurry."

Ivor laughed, and answered somewhat irrelevantly:

"I am afraid you'll come an awful mucker some day, Beausire."

"Shouldn't be at all surprised—it's in the family."

Ivor laughed again as he put his hand on Beausire's shoulders, and said:

"You don't give yourself a chance—you never did at Cambridge. You were always messing about, getting into rows, getting into debt, going to Newmarket, playing loo and baccarat, and playing Old Harry generally."

"And uncommonly glad I am of it. I wouldn't change all that were I to go up now. I came to the conclusion when I went up to Cambridge that it was a thousand chances to one against my ever having another chance, later in life, of playing the fool with impunity, and of having a roaring good time, and consequently made up my mind that I would make the most of it—and I did."

"Yes," answered Ivor, musingly, "it was a good time—there's no doubt about that—and I suppose it was good for any one to have a good time—once, at any rate."

"Of course it is, especially when there is deuced little chance of one's ever seeing it again."

They sat silent for some time after this, quietly puffing their pipes. The silence was broken by Ivor, who, apparently, following up a train of thought, said:

"Well, then, Beausire, shall we settle that it is to be Victoria ?"

"Certainly. One place is as good as another. I think we should be much wiser to go there than anywhere else, because you must not forget that our stock of cash is by no means unlimited, and we would do as well to go to the nearest place."

"I daresay you're right. I feel rather inclined to trust to that fellow whose book I have been reading. He doesn't appear to be puffing the place for any reason—in fact, he gives one the idea that it is rather a God-forsaken hole than otherwise."

"You decide, Ivor; I'll follow."

"Very well, then, let it be Victoria."

They knocked the ashes out of their pipes and went to bed.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 4.]

A GEOGRAPHICAL ERROR.

One of the earliest of our lessons in geography was that the earth turned on its axis. This was supposed to be a fixed line, but recent surveys and calculations have placed this among the uncertainties.

Of course, parallels of latitude are for this reason perpetually shifting. To be sure, the variation is but trifling, but it is quite enough to make a positive statement of the earth's axis impossible. The reason for this is that the poles of the earth describe a circle about the point ordinarily given as the ends of the axis. The radius of the circle is something like fourteen feet. The center of the circle travels in an ellipse, the major axis of which is about twenty-five feet and the minor about eight feet.

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A Fortunate Fire=Hunt.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

A year or two before the opening of the Revolution, the Morleys came down into the Mohawk Valley from the heart of New England, and, settling there, cleared a little place in the great forest and began life in the new home.

Rebecca Morley soon became the real head of the family, for the husband and father sustained a disabling injury in the clearing, and in time became nearly helpless.

The wife, a young woman with three small children to look after, came of Puritan stock and could look along the line of her ancestors to the landing of the Pilgrims. Indeed, she had in her possession the identical rifle which her great-grandfather had brought over from the old world in the *Mayflower*, and with which, on more than one occasion, he had hunted and fought with Miles Standish.

At the particular period of which we write the Indians were not very troublesome. but now and then they came sneaking about the white settlement, but did little more than pilfer. However, the war cloud which had hung over the Colonies grew darker, and with every new report came thoughts of war.

Perry Morley's injury increased in several ways, until at last he was unable to leave his bed. He could not assist at all in the management of the little farm, and his wife and children were compelled to take his place.

Toward the close of an autumn day one of the Morley children, who had been to mill on the only horse owned by the little family, returned with the report that a bear had been seen at the bridge, about a mile from the house.

"We shall be visited to-night," said Perry Morley, looking at his wife. "The animal will raid our pens, and unless they are guarded we will be the losers."

Mrs. Morley went direct to the family heirloom, which rested on a set of polished antlers, above the door, and began to inspect it. She had handled the rifle before, and could center-hit a very small target at a hundred yards.

Contrary to expectation, the bear did not make his appearance, and at last the family, tired of watching for his bearship, retired. The rifle, however, was not returned to the antlers, but was placed within easy reach of the bed, and Mrs. Morley's hand rested close to the polished stock.

Midnight had passed, when the husband, lying awake on account of pain, heard a peculiar sound outside the cabin, and in another moment had wakened his wife.

Accustomed to prompt action, Mrs. Morley rose, and, rifle in hand, went to the window and looked out. It was dark beyond the door, so dark, indeed, that one could not see one's hand when placed close to the face, and in vain did the pioneer woman look for the meaning of the noise.

Suddenly a great noise was heard toward the pens, and in an instant the door was opened.

"The bear has come at last," cried the woman, glancing at her husband, and then she dressed herself.

"You cannot shoot in the dark," was the reply. "Benny will light you to the pens."

The fire on the old-fashioned hearth still burned with a little brilliancy, and in a little while the eldest child, a boy of ten, and as courageous as his mother, held above his head a fagot which he had taken from the heap.

"Be careful," admonished the crippled father. "Don't fire till you see the eyes, Becky, and then send the bullet right between them."

Carrying the rifle, and followed by her son, who held the torch above his head, allowing its light to precede them, the courageous woman advanced toward the pens.

The anxious husband leaned toward the little window near the bed and held his breath. It was not the first time his wife had encountered Old Ephraim; but a hungry bear is not a nice enemy, and is apt, if wounded, to make a desperate battle.

In the neighborhood of the pens everything had become suddenly still, but the very silence was ominous, and this caused Mrs. Morley to proceed with caution.

"We have lost the bear, mother," said the boy, when they reached the pens and found no game.

"But he has been here. Look at the blood on the ground, and there lies one of the pigs dead."

Mother and son bent over the railing of the sty, and Benny held the torch close to the ground.

In one corner of the pen lay a fine pig, still bleeding, and for an animal of that kind to lie in the pen after a visit by a bear was most peculiar. Mrs. Morley took the torch from her son's hand and held it close to the porker.

Her face lost a little color as she rose and looked toward the wood.

"It must have been a little bear, mother, not to have been strong enough to run off with the pig," said Benny. "Seems to me he found that the pig was not fat enough, and so left it where it lies."

"Perhaps, Benny; but we will look after the bear a little. Take the path to the wood past the coops. We will see if we can find the prowler."

Clutching the rifle with more firmness, Rebecca Morley started toward the forest, and in a little while she and her son had passed the fringe and stood underneath the trees. Benny held the torch above his head while his mother looked on every side in hopes of seeing a living target for the family rifle.

"Mother," said the boy, "what if the bear was an Indian?"

Mrs. Morley glanced down at the little speaker and for a moment seemed to smile.

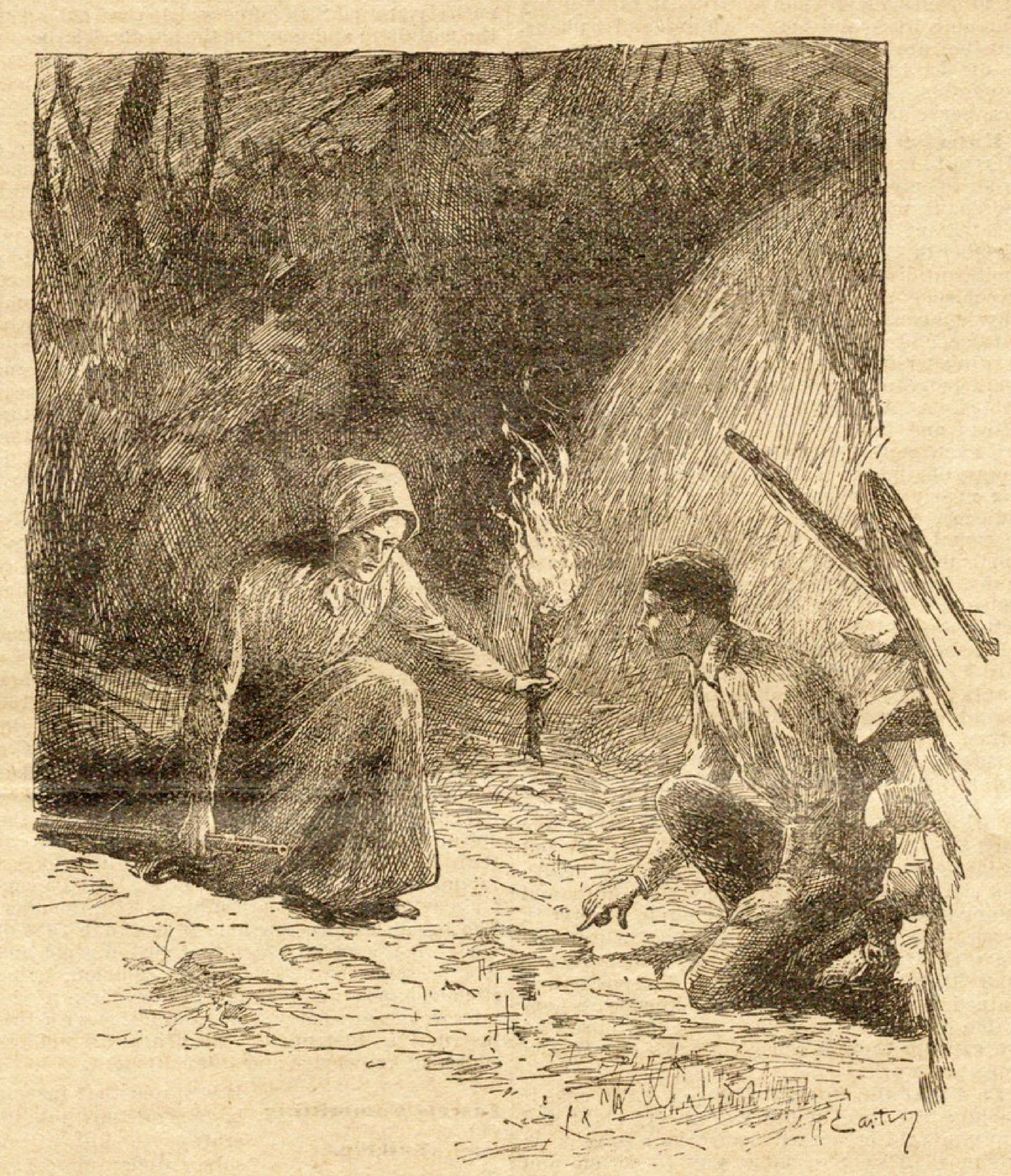
"An Indian, boy?"

"Why not? Haven't you noticed the strange marks on the ground between here and the pens."

"I have not been looking down very closely."

"Then let us go back a little and I will show you the tracks where the ground is soft."

Mother and son retraced their steps and all at once the latter pointed to the ground.



"HERE IS ONE OF THE TRACKS, MOTHER," SAID BENNY.

It was at a spot where the ground was still soft from recent rains, and very few leaves were there.

"Here is one of the tracks, mother," said Benny. "Don't you see it is shaped like a human foot and that the toes turn inward? I saw a good many Indian tracks on the old sand-bar last summer and we knew that *they* were Indian ones."

The settler's wife had taken the torch from her son's hands and was looking at the ground at her feet. The light fell full upon the spot and she could make out the outlines of a human footmark in the yielding soil.

"Our bear may be a redskin," said the boy, watching his mother.

There was no reply, as Mrs. Morley rose quickly and looked toward the cabin where she had left her husband and the other little ones asleep.

"Come," she said hastily. "If an Indian has been here we must reach the cabin as soon as possible."

In another moment mother and son were hastening toward the little home; but suddenly a cry from Benny's lips startled the mother, and she stopped and looked at him.

"The bear, mother, the bear!" said the boy, pointing toward the house, but a few rods distant.

Mrs. Morley leaned forward, her eager eye searching out the dark places which the light of the torch did not fully penetrate.

Benny had fallen behind his mother and was holding the flambeau above his head, his face pale and his little hands wound about the fagot with resolution.

"I see no bear, Benny," said Mrs. Morley.

"Neither do I now, but he was right over yonder among the bushes, for I got a glimpse of his eyes and—"

"Hush, Benny. I see him now!"

The light had sought out the clump of bushes designated by the pioneer boy, and Mrs. Morley had stepped back a pace and thrown the rifle to her shoulder.

"Remember what father said," whispered Benny. "Don't shoot till you can take him between the eyes."

"Never mind, Benny. He shall get it there or not at all."

The glistening targets which both mother and son now saw were near the ground as if the bear had crouched and the fire-light enabled them to see them plainly.

Benny Morely watched his mother while he held his breath, and wondered if the bear when killed would turn out to be a large one, or a weakling, as he fully believed—not large enough to carry off a pig after attacking the pen.

Seconds seemed minutes to the boy who held the torch for the determined woman, but suddenly the rifle rang out on the night air, and there followed a wild scream, while the two fiery eyes near the ground vanished instantly.

"You hit him, mother," cried the excited boy.

Mrs. Morley, standing like a statue in the fire-light, made no reply, but the boy noticed that she was deathly pale, and that the rifle trembled in her hands.

"He is over there among the bushes," continued Benny. "I did not hear him run. Mother, that was one of the best shots of your life."

Without a word Mrs. Morley advanced, followed by her son, to the clump of bushes, but she instinctively drew back, and for a moment passed her hand across her face.

The game lay dead at their feet.

There, in the light of the torch, with death in his staring eyes, lay an Indian dressed for the war-path and armed with tomahawk and scalping-knife, the former clutched in his grim, dead hand.

Benny Morley looked a moment amazed, and then almost dropped the torch.

"His eyes glittered like a bear's in the light," said he. "But, mother, if you had not killed him what would have become of us?"

The presence of the armed Indian about the little home, at that hour, told how narrow had been the escape of the family, and but for Mrs. Morley's fortunate fire-hunt there might have been an attack on the cabin.

The death of the prowling redskin was a secret which had to be kept, and long before daylight there was a grave in a secluded spot in the forest, and in time wild bushes grew over the spot, which was in no other manner marked.

The Indian had undoubtedly killed the pig, but in doing so had sealed his own doom, for he could not have heard of the courage of Rebbecca Morley nor of her marksmanship with the *Mayflower* rifle.

The secret of the fire-hunt was zealously kept by the Morleys; but Benny, when he grew to manhood, long after the Revolution, told to a few the story of the bear which turned out to be a Mohawk brave.

◆◆◆

—Venezuela first made declaration of its independence in 1810. The present republic was formed in 1830, in the same year that Belgium became an independent monarchy. The rival political parties in Venezuela are the Unionists and the Federalists. The former favor a centralized government; the latter are for home rule. Both are opposed to foreign invasion, encroachment or confiscation.

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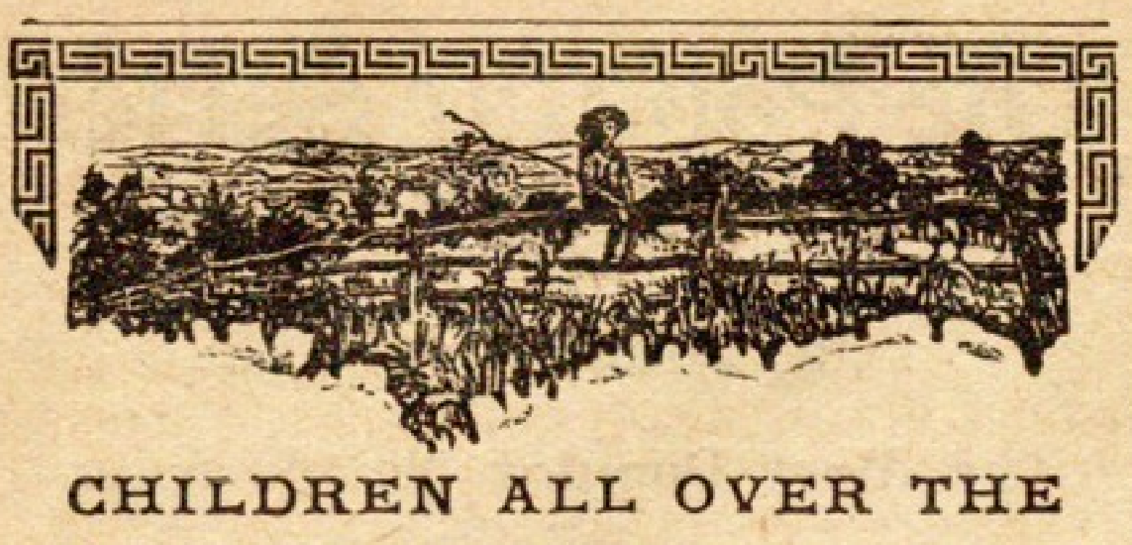


CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD.

Old Peggy Dunphy.

The poor, old candy-woman sat at the corner of the street every day. She wore a nice calico dress, a checked apron, and, in summer, a sunbonnet. In winter she put on a hood and a shawl, and had a little foot-stove for her feet. Pa's grandpa told us what it was. He said that when he was young, old ladies had them carried to church to put their feet on, and often used them in the house when they sat far from the big wood fires they used to warm the houses with where he came from, but he did not know that any one ever used them nowadays until he saw old Peggy's. He talked to her once about it. She said:

"It came from the ould country, sir, and it's saved my life manny a cowld day—bless it!"

When it rained, Peggy put up a great umbrella, like those they have on wagons, and never went home unless it was a very heavy storm.

All that Peggy sold she made herself, and she gave good measure, and she did not mind if a person could not quite make up her mind whether she wanted lemon candy or peanut taffy.

"Take your time, child," she used to say. "Niver do things in a hurry. The right idea will come after a while."

Once I said to her: "I'll tell you how it is. I've only got a penny, and I like peanut taffy best, and Kitty likes lemon-drops." And Peggy said:

"Well, then, I'll give you the half lemon and the half peanut, and you 'll both be contint."

So we bought all we wanted of Peggy after that. Besides candy, she had apples and ginger-snaps, and sometimes oranges. We all liked Peggy very much, and, oh, how sorry we were when one day a dreadful accident happened to her.

A wicked boy had stolen a lady's purse and was running away from the police and a crowd of other people after him.

Our school was just coming out, and some of us were going to buy candy and oranges, but we ran upon some door-steps to get out of the way, and as we stood there we saw poor Peggy standing between her table and the crowd to save her stock, and the next minute the thief struck against her and knocked her down, and the rest rushed past without stopping; and there lay the poor creature on the pavement, calling for help, and no one giving her any.

As soon as we could get to her we did. I sat down and put her head in my lap, and Kitty ran for pa. The other girls did what they could. One got a glass of water and one fanned her.

At last my pa came. He picked her up and carried her into our house and laid her on a lounge, and brother Bob went for a doctor. As for me, I stood by the table and watched it, and when the girls came along I asked them to buy everything they could, so that I could give the money to Peggy. Those who had pennies, did, and some ladies and gentlemen, who found out what I was doing, bought, too; and soon all the candies were sold and all the cakes; and I folded up the table, and asked the butcher to take care of it and Peggy's chair, and carried the money home to her.

When I got there the doctor had plastered a great cut on her head, and bound up her arm, which was sprained, and she was drinking a cup of tea. How astonished she was when I gave her the money and told her all was sold, and how grateful to ma and pa for their kindness to her!

"Folks say it 's a bad world," she said, "but I think it's mighty good. It 's like a story-book, so kind as you 've been to me!" She said that over again to the gentleman from the newspaper who came to ask about the accident—a reporter, he said he was, and put it all in the paper, where we read it a few days after. And he told how Peggy came from a respectable family in Ireland; how little Miss Ada and little Miss Kitty Brown sold her things at the stand for her; and made a real story of it.

That was Thursday. Peggy stayed at our house all the next day and Saturday, too; and in the evening, when she was beginning to feel much better, the door-bell rang, and there was a man who asked if Mrs. Peggy Dunphy was there still. Ma said "Yes," and asked him into the room where Peggy was, and as soon as he saw her, he called out: "Mother!" And she called out:

"Oh! My boy! My boy! My boy Patrick! Do I live to see you again!"

And he put his arms about her and she kissed him, and you never saw two people so happy.

Then he told ma and pa how he ran away to sea when he was a boy, and when he came back found that his mother had gone to America with his married sister. The sister was dead, and they told him his mother was, and he had never known happiness since.

"But yesterday," he said, "I was reading the paper, and behold! there was the story of the accident, and my mother's name, and the place she came from, and all your kindness to her; and I began to hope I'd found her; and I have. And but for your goodness, maybe there 'd never have been so much written, and we 'd not have been brought together. And God bless you forever, anyhow!"

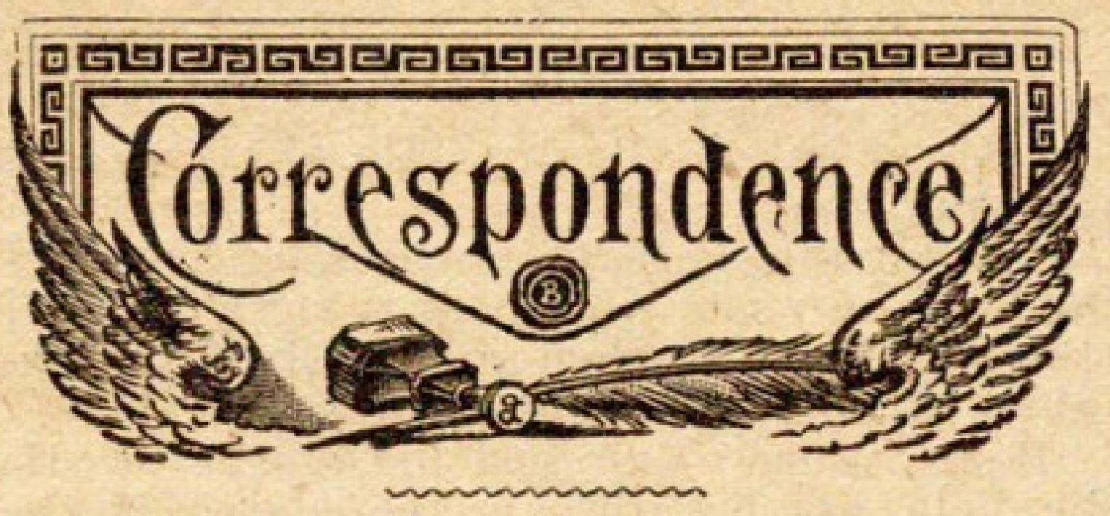
Then he told us he had plenty of money, and would take care of his mother as long as she lived; and after awhile he took her away in a cab, just the happiest person that ever lived.

The next day he sent us two great wax dolls, all dressed in silk.

"A present from my mother, with thanks for your goodness," he wrote. "And I'm taking her home to Ireland to see the old place again."

That is the last we ever saw of them; but ma says it was a nice end to old Peggy's story, and that Peggy was so kind and cheerful while she was poor and lonely that she deserved the good fortune that seemed to have come to her at last. And little did the old woman think when she got the fall that hurt her so, that it was a means of bringing about a reunion with her lost son.

"The angels," said mamma, "often bring about our blessings in very astonishing ways."



Correspondence

Subject for Debate.—Louis L. asks the *Ledger's* advice on the following subject. He belongs to a debating club, and the subject is, "Would the United States be justified in declaring war against England?" Now Louis L. wants some points, and he is on the affirmative side of the question. *Answer:* This is rather a hard job, considering that the *Ledger* believes in peace and arbitration and in settling difficulties without blows and bloodshed. If you were only on the other side it would be easy. But as you must have an argument, why not say that Great Britain has for a long time been gathering all of the spare territory that she could find lying about loose, and it is quite time to whistle down-brakes. Say she is arrogant and aggressive, and that a little corporal punishment, such as being taken across Columbia's lap and spanked with a slipper, might have a salutary effect. Declare that war is like thunder-storms, it clears the atmosphere, and as armies must be maintained in the field, there is a call for bread-stuffs and provisions of all sorts, also textiles and, indeed, almost everything. Therefore, war creates a demand for almost all kinds of merchandise, makes business good, and, in addition, gives quantities of idle men employment. True, it takes many valuable lives and leaves widows and orphans, but they are liable to die from other causes, and to die for the honor of one's country is always honorable. These are only a few points, but they may serve as pegs to hang ideas on.

Entering the Army or Navy.—George J., Martin L. B. and others ask what is necessary in order to enter Annapolis or West Point, also the merchant marine service. *Answer:* To enter West Point one must make application to the Member of Congress of the district wherein the applicant lives. To be eligible he must be between seventeen and twenty-two years of age, of physical condition rendering him fit for military service, and able to pass a rigid examination in reading, writing, orthography, arithmetic, grammar, geography and the History of the United States. At Annapolis the age must be between fifteen and twenty. The health requirements are even more strict than for West Point. The course of study is most comprehensive, embracing nearly all of the branches taught in the colleges, except those bearing strictly on professional subjects. Only a moderate number of applicants are able to pass examination, and many, even after being admitted, drop out because the study is too hard for them. Upon being appointed, the applicant receives notice where he is to report.

A Trained Nurse.—A Reader of the *Ledger* wants to know what qualifications are necessary for admission into a hospital to study for a nurse. Also, to whom application must be made. *Answer:* Write to the superintendent of any hospital you may select and ask for their rules on the subject. There may be different requirements in each. As a general preparation, one must be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, of good moral character, good health and with a tolerable education and quick and comprehensive mind. A good nurse is next in importance to a good doctor. Indeed, in ordinary cases skillful nursing is of more consequence than skillful medical treatment. The position of trained nurse, while it has hardships, is an honorable one, and is well paid, and for those who are capable there is almost always steady and congenial work.

To Clear the Complexion.—L. E. M. asks if washing the face in hot water every night and applying cold cream will cause hair to grow on the face. Also give some way to soften and whiten the skin. *Answer:* The use of hot water and cold cream is not likely to cause the face to become disfigured with hair. Still it may do so; or if there is a natural tendency that way, it may be increased by such means. Keeping the skin perfectly clean is one of the very best things that can possibly be done. Then rub into it some delicate preparation like rose-water and glycerine.

Choice of Studies.—Henry S. wants to know what studies to pursue in order to develop his faculties and see what his inclinations may be for a business or profession. *Answer:* After a common-school education, take up reading on scientific subjects, medicine, surgery, legal points, or commercial topics. Take note of the things you most enjoy and are the most deeply interested in, and soon you may discover how your tastes run. If you find yourself with a real enthusiasm for any particular branch, take it up and make yourself an expert in it.

Books on Coins.—A Subscriber asks where one may get books on coins; also, the prices at which coins are sold. *Answer:* Various dealers issue what they call catalogues, but they rarely contain any satisfactory information about the prices of coins. They give a few lists of articles for sale, all rather vague and indefinite, and some descriptions of stamps, books and the like. The so-called catalogues are sold at prices ranging from ten to twenty-five cents. The dealers make a very profitable business in selling their lists at such figures.

Weary Looks.—Alden asks why people often become drowsy and sleepy after reading a short time; also, what makes the eyes appear sunken, and how it can be remedied? *Answer:* Sometimes the eyes look heavy and drowsy because they are overtaxed. Wearing spectacles will perhaps be a benefit. Sunken eyes come from a variety of causes. Too much mental work or too little sleep may produce this effect. Smoking cigarettes is often the cause.

Japanese Club.—An American Girl asks if there is in New York City a Japanese Club. If so, what is its standing and are visitors admitted? *Answer:* Some years ago there was, and in all probability is now, a flourishing private club composed of Japanese gentlemen. Guests were admitted upon invitation, and it was very exclusive. Its members were highly cultivated men, and the club was in every respect first-class.

Cigarette-Smoking.—Society boy wants to know how cigarette-smoking affects boys, and if it is as injurious as the papers seem to think. *Answer:* Cigarette-smoking has destroyed the health of a great many boys. It checks the growth, makes the lad puny and pale, and unfits him for the duties of a stalwart American citizen. It makes him irritable, quarrelsome and disagreeable, and lays the train for an appetite for strong drink. There is nothing to be said in favor of the cigarette and much to be said against it.

⁂Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.

Science

The Condition of Sable Island. This island is, according to recent surveys, rapidly dissolving, and will at the present rate disappear within a few years. It is now about twenty miles long by one mile wide. There are numerous shoals and a line of breakers fifty miles long. The wrecks about this place are almost incredible in number, something over two hundred having been known during this century. Very strong currents run about it, in some instances sweeping entirely around it in fierce whirls that cut away the mainland and tear out the shoals. The heavy winds cause a continual change in the surface of the island. Landmarks are almost immediately destroyed, and constant watchfulness is necessary to prevent the sand near the few dwellings from being blown away altogether. There are a few wild horses on the island, and these sometimes furnish food for the dwellers on this barren drift. A curious condition of affairs as regards smaller animals is thus described by a visitor: "English rabbits were introduced at one time and soon overran the island, but they were exterminated by rats that came ashore from some vessel. The government then sent cats to the island, and these, after extinguishing the rats, became so numerous that dogs and shot-guns were brought to destroy them. Rabbits were then imported once more, and again became numerous, but were exterminated a second time by snowy owls." The dangerous condition of this vicinity has suggested the advisability of removing the few inhabitants and blowing up the island altogether. Maintaining lighthouses is an extremely expensive affair. One built in 1873 cost forty thousand dollars, and was swept away within ten years. Since 1882 the lighthouse has been moved three miles inland from its original location. The island has little, if any value, and is a constant menace to navigation.

The Microscopic Examination of Cotton. Cotton fiber, when magnified about 150 diameters, has the appearance of a band of ribbon twisted in a spiral. It is thicker at the edges than in the middle, and has irregular surface markings. In some cotton the spiral characteristics are much more apparent than in others. In the better qualities of Sea Island cotton a transverse section shows a central cavity running longitudinally with the fiber. The breadth of cotton fiber is less than that of wool. It is a curious fact that cotton, wool and silk present characteristics in common, being ribbon-shaped and spiral. The wonders of the microscope are many, and familiarity with this instructive instrument furnishes an endless source of knowledge and entertainment.

Insects Committing Suicide. It is stated that insects have been known deliberately to kill themselves under certain forms of torture or provocation. Experiments have been tried upon wasps, which are extremely sensitive to benzine and dislike the odor very much. A tumbler was sprinkled with benzine, then inverted over a wasp, which at once attacked a bit of paper that was under the glass. Finally the wasp appeared to become desperate. He threw himself on his back, bent himself together and drove his sting three times into his body, then he died. Repeated trials convinced the scientists that wasps would, under these circumstances, take their own lives, as several of them got out of their uncomfortable atmosphere in this way.

Prepared Fuel. Many experiments have been made with prepared fuel pressed into bricks, but they have not been a pronounced success. The trouble is said to be owing to the coarseness of the particles. A new and practical process grinds the material into almost dust-like fineness. It is then mixed with pitch, coal-tar and other ingredients and heated and compressed into cakes sufficiently hard to bear transportation, to burn with the utmost freedom, to be uninjured by wet and much more manageable in every way than ordinary coal. It is also dustless, which is a great point, especially for household use.

Why Propeller Shafts Break. It can scarcely be wondered at that propeller shafts give way under the tremendous strain caused by the rolling of the ship in a heavy sea. The leverage when the ship rises on the crest of a wave would seem to be sufficient to tear the structure in pieces. Engineers have been giving some attention to this subject, and find that it is not an unusual thing for the shaft of a propeller to be sprung an inch and a quarter to an inch and a half during heavy storms. Proper bracing and strengthening will do away with this danger.

Some Points About Metals. Extreme cold increases the tenacity of pure metals and alloys, and the higher the melting point of metal the stronger it is likely to be. This is accounted for by the statement that metals with high melting points must necessarily be coherent and tenacious. Metals are composed of molecules, and high-melting-point metals require an enormous amount of heat to drive the molecules apart.

WOMAN'S WORLD

All questions which may be asked on subjects treated in this Department will answered in the Correspondence column.

Fashion and Fancy. The custom of spending a p tion of the winter in the co try-house has become so gene that the habits, occupations amusements of the family have come to be re lated accordingly.

A pleasant custom is that of making up a ho party for the country-place to remain for seve weeks. The host and the men guests may g their business daily if they choose, or spend t time hunting, riding or talking. This leaves ladies of the establishment with many hours their hands, some of which are agreeably pu by some of the new varieties of fancy work.

Embroidery is an ever-present source of en tainment, and as very many women are hig skilled with the needle, this is not only a pl ant but a profitable fashion of passing the ti

There are so many exquisite things to be m for the dining-table and for the toilet-table t the attention of artistic needlewomen runs a g deal in this direction. A good quality of lin fine and even, is selected for doilies and ta centers. If one chooses a round piece, the eas way to finish it is, after a perfect circle is dra to put it into the sewing machine and mak double row of stitching exactly over the ma This stitching is best done with silk above a below. From this the edge can be wrought fringed, as fancy dictates. If something of t kind is not done, it is difficult to make the ed perfectly smooth and regular.

A center recently finished has a tiny scallop the outside of the stitched margin. Above th scallops are little lappets made of silk wrou on a flat foundation in buttonhole stitch. S on linen makes most beautiful decorations. is more effective than linen floss, and for fine a light pieces is altogether profitable. One m purchase ready for finishing all manner of cha ing designs. Some of them are merely stamp others are stamped and have the figures wrou to show the stitches and the style of worki Exceedingly dainty table centers' and doilies made with linen centers and edges of lace br wrought in figures. Various patterns of br are used, and these make rosettes, leaves a vines to be filled out with tendrils, and all of fine detail of artistic work. Bolting cloth ma very beautiful articles. It is wrought in wh silk, as colors do not show to such good adv tage.

In decoration for the house there are some sirable novelties. One of the most sensible i lounge cover, made somewhat after the fash of the Turkish striped covers that have be so popular. This is made from strips of natu colored home-spun linen. The stripes are ab twelve inches wide and are embroidered in v ous spreading and open patterns, lattices, vi and leaves. When finished, these stripes provided with crochet edges with loops throu which braid or cord is run to lace the stripes gether. There is about half an inch of space tween the edges, and when this is filled in wi a ribbon or galloon it is very pretty.

Ribbon work is fashionable and extremely fective for the amount of labor bestowed up it. Ordinary taffeta ribbon is used, and th known as seam-binding is useful. A chrys themum made of seam-binding ribbon is very tractive. A cover for a lounge is made of strip of satin in black and orange. It was made the home room of a Princeton student who is travagantly luxurious in his tastes when und his own roof. The embroidery are convention ized chrysanthemums. On the yellow strip the flowers are made of white ribbon with pi edge. The stems are embroidered in natural- ored chenille and silks. On the black stripes heliotrope, old-rose and yellow flowers. T stripes are lined with velvet and set togeth with green satin the color of the leaves a stalks. This joining stripe is an inch wide, a is set underneath the edges of the pieces wh it joins. On these extreme edges are sewed intervals of half an inch tiny crochet rings alternate black and orange. Through these rin are laced black and orange ribbons over t green space. At the ends there are tassels orange and black ribbons. The lining is oran colored velvet, and a black-satin ribbon is bou over the edges and embroidered down wi feather-stitching in orange cord silk.

Notes. As a new sort of fancy work, a number ladies are taking up veneering on wo A cabinet or other article is selected, a the veneers are cut in suitable shape, and put in some fanciful pattern. Lines, bands, squa or geometrical figures are best for beginners, b one worker, who has had experience, has ju finished a cabinet on which is a conventionali design in passion flowers. It is extremely beau ful and artistic. The veneerings are very sligh tinted before being applied, the leaves and sta are in a delicate olive and the flower in the usu heliotrope, the center being colored in aft wards. This veneer is applied with proper prepared glue, and allowed to become perfec dry, then, with an exceedingly sharp knife, t edges are beveled down until there is scarcely projecting edge to be felt. This is a very delica job and requires careful handling, but when fi ished is well worth while. Mahogany, cherr chestnut and white wood make excellent found tions for this form of decoration. Very pla articles should be chosen, and it is well to deci upon the pattern to be applied before purchasi the article on which one is to work. Of cours it is much better to have the things made order, but as this is not possible for every on it is wise to keep in mind the form of decorati when selecting ready-made pieces.

A popular item of the present season is the do dress in crape-paper. The body may either be clothes-pin, the face being sketched on the roun head of the pin, or an ordinary doll may be use Dresses, bonnets and petticoats are of paper, ribbon necktie or sash being tied closely aroun to keep the paper in place.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

(Continued.)

The doll of the period is an interesting and complicated creature. She has her toilet, her down-sitting and uprising outfits, her indoor and out-of-door equipments, her carriage and her servants, and recently an ingenious designer has gotten out a full-rigged schoolroom for dolls. There are benches and blackboards and maps, pictures, desks and doll school-ma'am. Nothing is omitted, even to the bad doll who stands in the corner in disgrace.

Pretty and useful photograph frames are made of circles of cardboard covered with crape paper. These are joined, leaving a space to slip the photograph through. The paper may be painted in floral design, or paper flowers made and attached in vine pattern around the margin. An exceedingly dainty one is made square, and from the middle drawn back to either side are tiny garlands of flowers and vines.

A novelty in pin-cushions is a tiny stand upon which the cushion is placed. This stand is about fourteen inches long by eight inches wide, and rests on four round posts or balls. It is of wood, and is either carved or decorated in poker-work, or it may be veneered in different woods.

An attractive addition to children's toys are animals made of wood and decorated with poker-work. There are cats, horses, pigs, dogs, camels and tigers, and the meek and patient-looking mule is not forgotten.

Cradles for dolls are made of wood and decorated with poker-work. A large-sized cradle of this sort makes a most convenient and useful work-basket.

Dangers of the Dust-Brush. It is a perfectly understood thing among people who work at that business, that the making of powder is attended with constant and ever-present danger. The most trifling accident, the most unforeseen incident may fire the mass and blow every living creature in the vicinity into eternity without an instant's warning. And yet there is very little trouble in getting all the help one wants to make this and kindred explosives, and, as a rule, the men are as clear-headed and light-hearted as those who follow any other occupation.

Pasteur once made the remark that the dust-brush and broom were a thousandfold more dangerous than gunpowder and cost the world thousands of lives to one of the latter. It seems like an exaggerated statement that, while gunpowder and explosives have caused the death of thousands, the broom and dust-brush have slain millions, but this is a fact past question. Constant stirring up of dirt in the house is a menace to health and a direct destroyer of life. The time will come when such a thing as a carpet will not be permitted in a civilized household and when the floor-brush and broom will have disappeared forever. Few people realize that they may bring in from the street on their shoes or skirts every form of disease that flesh is heir to. This is ground off into the carpet, the warmth of the apartment helps on the process of development, then the housemaid deliberately sets the germs in motion with her broom and the air is filled with them. They settle on the furniture and ornaments, and with the dust-brush she whisks them off again on the carpet where they remain possibly to propagate, certainly to live until by the next stirring up they may float into somebody's lungs or throat.

This is precisely what they have been waiting for and is the object of their existence. Once settled in their congenial quarters they begin their deadly work, and the system is soon overrun with their progeny, then there may be attacks of coughing, expectorating and floating germs on the breath to scatter this same deadly enemy not only through this dwelling but all others from which visitors come and go.

There was at one time an epidemic of throat trouble in a community, and greatly were the doctors puzzled to know how the infection spread, as the only original case had been confined to the house for a long time, and never mingled with his neighbors. At last some one recalled the fact that this man had been to the post-office, then some one remembered that as he stood talking with some friends, he expectorated into the register of the heater. Down in the pipe a quantity of dust and lint had lodged, and here, in this agreeably warm bed, millions of germs were liberated, and, rising on the hot air current, floated out into the open space in the post-office lobby.

It is high time that the deadly nature of germs of this sort were proclaimed aloud through the land. Bacteriology in some simple way should be taught in every public school, and hand in hand with these instructions should go warnings against the broom and dust-brush. Bare floors or matting which can be wiped clean with damp cloths, are the only suitable, safe and sanitary floor coverings. Next in order come the better grades of oil-cloth. Well-fitted, matched flooring, thoroughly oiled and kept reasonably clean, makes a floor that meets all the conditions of health. Happy will the human family be when floors of this and similar kinds are the rule and not the exception.

Cheese Pudding. To four tablespoonfuls each of fine bread-crumbs and grated cheese add two eggs, butter the size of a walnut and pepper and salt to taste. Butter a deep pie dish and put in it all the ingredients except the eggs. Then beat the yolks of the eggs in a small cup of milk, add the whites, beaten to a froth, pour this over the crumbs and bake in a hot oven for twenty minutes.

Liver in Batter. Slice the liver and boil twenty minutes. When cool, dip each slice in a batter and fry until brown in very hot pork fat.

BATTER.—Two eggs, four tablespoonfuls of flour and one-half teaspoonful of salt. After frying quickly in the hot pork fat remove to a platter, and in the same fat fry slices of sour apples. Garnish the platter with apples and serve with hot toast.

Patterns.

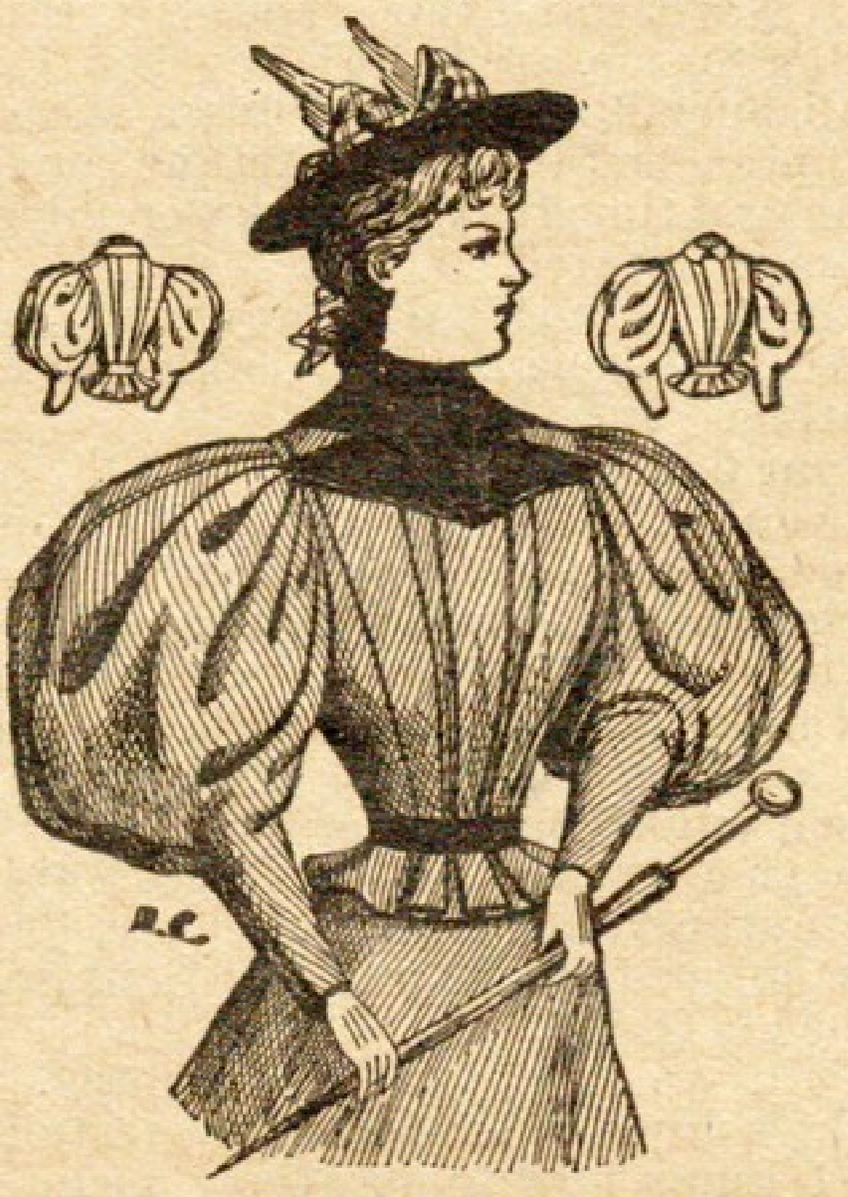
We have made special arrangements by which we can supply our readers with dress-patterns by mail, prepaid, at the nominal price of ten cents per pattern.

Each issue of the *Ledger*, hereafter, will contain illustrations of two or more new styles, for which patterns will be supplied to order. Parties ordering will please use a small sheet of plain writing-paper, small enough to go into an ordinary envelope, write name very plainly and give post-office and State, together with street and number, wherever necessary. Be careful to give correct bust-measure and the number of the pattern desired, using the number under the illustration. Inclose ten cents in stamps for each pattern ordered. State that you are a reader of the *Ledger*, otherwise these patterns will cost you 25, 30 or 35 cents each, as the case may be, these being the regular prices for which the patterns are sold.

The patterns selected for illustration in this issue are numbered 6653, 6631 and 6643.

Misses' Norfolk Basque.

Illuminated serge in brown and tan is here happily combined with golden brown velvet, making this stylish basque deservedly popular for school, cycling, best or general wear. The adjustment is glove-fitting to the waist-line, below which it falls with a slight ripple to fashionable length over the hips, the box-plaits being graded and applied from the shoulders and the center of fronts and back to lower edge of basque. Two styles of collar are provided by the pattern, a high, close-fitting collar, and a low-cut, revers collar, both of which are made of velvet. When the revers collar is used, the plait is cut off at perforations, and the upper part of fronts faced with velvet to simulate a chemisette. The closing is invisible under box-plait in center front. A belt of velvet is worn around the waist. The fashionable full mandolin sleeves are shaped in three sections, each seam being piped with velvet. The top is gathered and arranged over comfortable linings, the wrists being finished with a velvet piping. Simple in construction and dressy in effect, this style of basque requires neither decoration nor trimming, and can be made all of one material, if so desired. Cheviot, serge, camel's-hair, vicuna, covert and ladies' cloth, and all varieties of smooth and rough-faced suitings in plaid, striped, mixed or checked designs develop stylishly by the mode.



6653—MISSES' NORFOLK BASQUE

Pattern **6653** is cut in three sizes, for Misses of 12, 14 and 16 years of age.

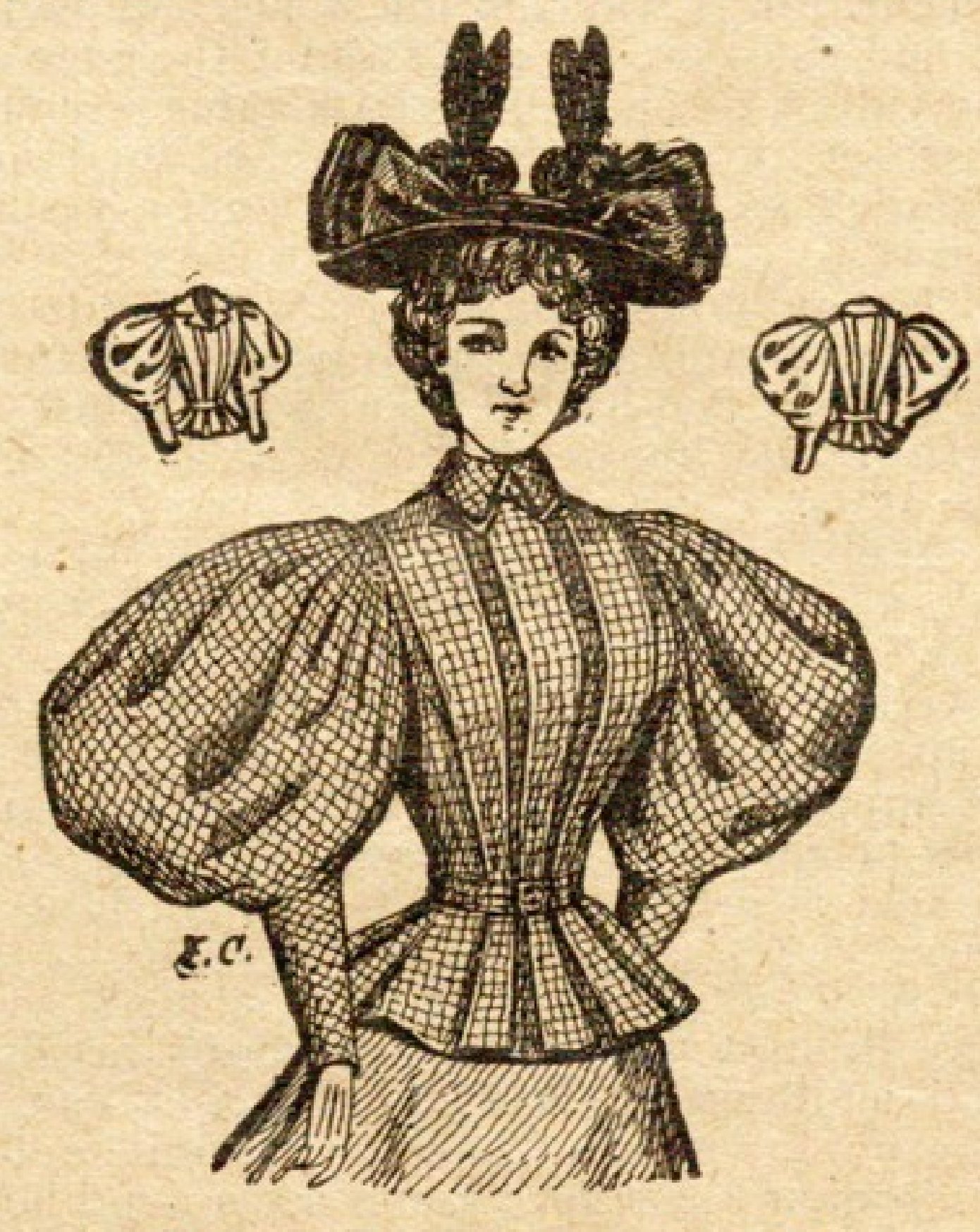
Quantity of Material 44 Inches Wide.

12 years old		3	yards.
14	"	3¼	"
16	"	3½	"

Retail price of pattern **6653** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Ladies' Norfolk Basque with Plaits Laid On.

Checked tweed in Scotch heather mixture made this stylish basque, which is a popular mode for shopping, walking, driving, cycling or general wear. The adjustment is glove-fitting to the waist-line, below which it falls, with a slight ripple, to fashionable length over the hips, the box-plaits being graded and applied from the shoulders and the center of fronts and back to the lower edge of basque. A belt of the material is worn around the waist. The closing is effected invisibly in center front under the box-plait. Two styles of collar are provided by the pattern, a high-rolling collar that is closed to the neck, as shown on the figure, and a low-cut reverse collar to wear with a chemisette, as shown in the small drawing. The fashionable, full gigot sleeves are gathered at the top over comfortable sleeve linings, and are plainly completed at the wrists.



6631—LADIES' NORFOLK BASQUE WITH PLAITS LAID ON.

This style of basque is simple in construction and dressy in effect, requires no decoration or trimming of any kind, is becoming to all figures, and, for these reasons, held in general favor, retaining to-day the popularity achieved on its first introduction to the world of fashion. Cheviot, serge, camel's hair, vicuna, covert and ladies' cloth and all varieties of smooth and rough-faced suitings in plaid, striped, mixed or checked designs will develop stylishly by the mode.

Pattern **6631** is cut in six sizes, viz.: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust measure.

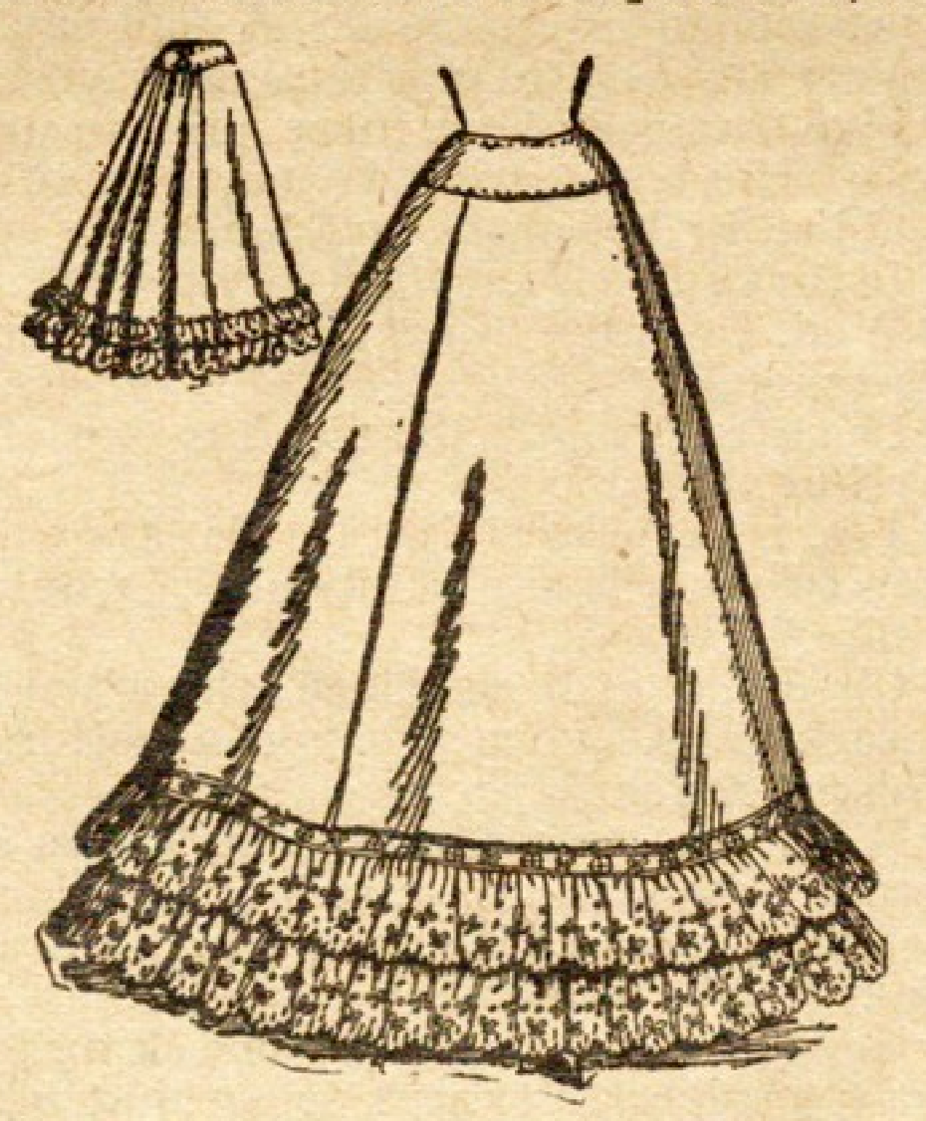
Quantity of Material 44 Inches Wide.

For	32 inches	bust measure		4⅛	yds.
"	36	"	"	4⅜	"
"	40	"	"	4⅝	"
"	42	"	"	4⅞	"

Retail price of pattern **6631** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Ladies' Long Yoke Petticoat.

Fine cambric is here illustrated, the foot trimming being a double frill of English embroidery headed with insertion to match. This practical style is adapted to black and colored taffeta, chine silk, moreen or sateen that are trimmed with two, three or more pinked, hemmed or corded ruffles, and thus increase the flare of dress skirts without unnecessary bulk. An underfacing of haircloth is desirable in these petticoats, as it holds the stiffness permanently. The skirt is shaped with front and side gores that join smoothly to the yoke and a full back width that is gathered at the top, joined to the yoke. The yoke fits smoothly without wrinkle and closes its center back with buttons and buttonholes, a placket being finished in back gore. White and colored lawn, batiste and China silk are daintily trimmed with fine tucking, insertion and lace or embroidered edging for evening wear.



6643—LADIES' LONG YOKE PETTICOAT.

Pattern **6643** is cut in five sizes, viz.: 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inches waist measure.

Quantity of Material 36 Inches Wide.

22 inches	waist	measure		4¼	yards
26	"	"	"	4½	"
30	"	"	"	4¾	"

Retail price of pattern **6643** is 30 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

The Gossip of Children. "There, that will do; not a word! I don't want to hear anything about it."

"But, mamma, I only just want to tell you that Jennie's ma said something very disagreeable about Mrs. Smith."

"Well, suppose she did. You should not listen to such things, nor are you to repeat them when you come home. There is nothing so ill-bred and rude as to tell things that you hear when you are visiting with other children."

This bit of conversation occurred the other morning in a well-bred family, and is the keynote to the management of that household.

It was in striking contrast to the methods of the establishment that the child had just left. "Jennie's ma" is much given to curiosity about the affairs of her neighbors, and rarely fails to elicit from her numerous family even the most minute details of conversations that are indulged in in their presence. She knows almost every article in the houses where her children visit, what they have for dinner, how they serve it, and what the personal habits of each one are. Her little ones have been trained from their cradles to repeat to her everything that happens wherever they may be. They have already become the dread of the neighborhood, and if anything unusual occurs in a family in their vicinity, the strictest vigilance is required to keep them out of the midst of it. They have respect neither for bolts, bars nor prohibition, and are growing up scandal-mongers of the most dangerous sort. If they cannot find out the rights of things, they jump at conclusions, so as to make out a "good story to tell ma when they get home." If they have played hookey or been in any mischief whatever, a well-constructed recital of something that has happened or that they can imagine may have happened among their numerous acquaintances means freedom from punishment and possibly the getting off with nothing more than a mild reproof. They climb ladders, crawl into chamber windows and creep through lattices in pursuit of information.

Not long since one of them was, with a good deal of difficulty, extricated from a cold-air box leading from the heater, supposing it to be a ventilator into the cellar. The world would be a great deal happier and better, and humanity would be a long ways farther toward the millennium if children could be taught to curb their curiosity and mind their own business; but this they never can or will do as long as their families catechise and quiz them as to everything that happens when they go out.

Oatmeal Griddle Cakes. Two cups of well-cooked oatmeal, two cups of milk, one egg, well-beaten, salt to taste, about one cup of flour, or enough to make stiff enough to turn well, with an even teaspoonful of baking powder. These are very delicate.

Ideal Husbands. Some time ago, the editor of an English magazine sent out a request to a number of eminent women to give their opinion as to the characteristics of an ideal husband.

The responses varied greatly, and were not altogether satisfactory to the public. "John Strange Winter" (Mrs. Stannard) thought it a very amusing notion that one should expect to find anything ideal in a man.

Mrs. Fenwick Miller was of a similar opinion, but even more flippant on the subject. Mrs. Boyd-Carpenter, wife of the Lord Bishop of Ripon, said that an ideal husband without an ideal wife is impossible. Mrs. Crawford's idea is that an ideal husband would be an unmitigated bore.

The opinions of others were somewhat on the same line, but no one seems to have given an eminently satisfactory answer to the query.

However clever these women may be in portraying character, and certainly Mrs. Stannard's "Bootles" is almost an ideal one, it goes without saying that their private and unofficial opinion does not impress one with the belief that they have any particular faith in ideal man. Such inquiries and discussions are supremely silly. Very few persons are willing to put themselves on record in print as to their personal opinion of some man with whom they may or may not be in love. Even though they did, the public would take it with grains of salt.

The ideal man cannot be described for the simple reason that though he were perfectly agreeable to the describer, he might not fill the bill at all to the mind of the reader. Every happy couple are ideal husband and wife to each other, and further than that it is out of the question to fix any given scale or catalogue of qualities or virtues.

The world is full of men who are not ideal, and they find ample and appropriate companionship in women of the same sort. There are probably more ideal women than men, because society requires a higher standard for the one than for the other, though why this is, no one is able to give a good and satisfactory reason. One woman used to declare that she had an ideal husband, although her dear five hundred friends knew that he periodically went on sprees. But he always indulged in these away from home, and neither his wife nor children ever saw him the worse for drink. Aside from this infirmity, he probably was one of the noblest and best men that ever lived. Of course, as far as his wife knew, he was as nearly perfect as it is given to ordinary mortals to be. A man who knew him well, used to say that, conscious of this weakness, he turned all the forces of a strong character toward making himself everything that was good and honorable, and avoiding the little pecadillos and irritating small faults that more than anything else tend to destroy all that is worthy and admirable in humanity.

After due consideration of all of these opinions it would appear that there is but one ideal man in the world, and that is the one with whom a woman is in love.

The Use of a Lemon. There are a great many people in this world who fancy that when lemonade and lemon extract and lemon drops are catalogued, there isn't very much left for this familiar fruit. But when these uses are met, the value of a lemon is scarcely comprehended. As a remedy for a cold, few things are better than lemon-juice and sugar. Very few of the disease germs that cause us the most annoyance are able to survive contact with the juice of the lemon. If, after coming in from a dusty street, or after mingling with the unwashed and unkempt crowds in which we sometimes find ourselves, we would cut off a slice of lemon, rub the face with it, and rinse the mouth and throat with the clear juice, many diseases that now afflict us would be kept at a proper distance. After having the hands in hot water, or after using many malodorous substances, a thorough rubbing with lemon will restore the delicacy of the skin, and remove any objectionable smell. The finger-nails are greatly improved by applications of lemon juice. Pimples and blackheads may be removed or kept away by the same means. An occasional brushing of the teeth with lemon juice is a most excellent thing, provided the acid is carefully washed away afterward. It is said that corns and bunions may be removed by binding on a piece of lemon night after night. Certainly when the feet are tired and swollen, there is nothing better as an application, after a good bathing, than lemon juice and alcohol in equal parts. A tablespoonful is quite enough, and the preparation ought to be found on every toilet-table. After lemons are used for table purposes, the pieces may be put on a shelf over the kitchen sink, where they will be handy to rub the hands with, to remove stains, to take spots out of linen, or to mix with salt and polish brasses. There is probably no fruit in ordinary use that has so many excellent qualities and is so comprehensively valuable as the lemon.

The Care of Your Eyes. Keep a shade on your lamp or gas-burner. Avoid all sudden changes between light and darkness. Never read by twilight, moonlight, or on cloudy days. Never read or sew directly in front of the light of window or door. It is best to let the light fall from above obliquely over the left shoulder. Do not use the eyesight by light so scant that it requires an effort to discriminate. Never sleep so that on first awakening the eyes shall open on the light of a window. Never begin to read, write, or sew for several minutes after coming from darkness to light. The moment you are instinctively prompted to rub your eyes, that moment stop using them. If the eyelids are glued together on waking up, do not forcibly open them, but apply saliva with the finger—it is the speediest dilutant in the world—then wash your eyes and face in warm water.

Cranberry Pie. To two cups of chopped cranberries add one cup of raisins, seeded and chopped, half a cup of granulated sugar, the same amount of water, two tablespoonfuls of flour and one egg. Line pie plate with rich crust and fill with the mixture; cover with an upper crust and bake in a rather slow oven.

A GIRL FROM WASHINGTON.*

BY HAMLIN GARLAND.

CHAPTER I.

The train which brought young Ramsey into Red Rock gave him no view of the mountains, because it arrived about eight o'clock of a dark day. He went to bed early in order to be up early and prostrate himself before the peaks.

He was awakened by the sound of loud, hearty voices, and looking out of the window, saw a four-horse team standing before the little hotel. On the wagon's side was a sign which made the heart of the youth leap—

CRINKLE CREEK STAGE.

DAVE WILLIS, Pro.

He was in the land of gold. It was like a chapter from a story by Bret Harte. He dressed himself hurriedly, and went down and out into the cool, keen dawn, eager to catch a glimpse of the great peak whose name had been in his ear since a child.

There it soared, dull purple, splotched with dark green, and rising to white at its shoulders, and radiant with light on its crown. In such impassable grandeur, it must have loomed upon the eyes of the first little caravan trailing its way across the prairie to the west.

It was also much more stupendous than he had imagined, and doubts of his ability to fit with all this splendor came to him with great force. He remembered the smooth, green bluffs and fertile valleys he had left behind, and he had a touch of homesickness.

After supper that evening he confided to the landlord his plans of finding a foreman's position on a stock-farm.

"Well, I dunno. There are such places, but they're always snapped up 'fore you can say Jack Robinson."

"Well, I'm going to give it a good try," the young fellow said bravely.

"That's right. If I was you, I'd go out and see some of these real-estate fellers; they most always know what's going on."

"That's a good idea; much obliged. I'll tackle 'em to-morrow," said Arthur, and he went off to bed, feeling victory almost a tame bird in his hands.

The next forenoon he made his first attempt. He had determined on his speech, and he went into the first office with his song on his lips.

"I'm looking for a place on a dairy farm; I've had five years' practical experience, and am a graduate of the —— Agricultural College. I'm after the position of bookkeeper and foreman."

The man looked at him gravely.

"You're aiming pretty high, young feller, for this country. There are plenty of chances to work, punching cattle, but I don't think chances are good for a foreman's place." He was a kindly man, and repented when he saw how young Ramsey's face fell. "However, I'll give you some names of people to—hire."

On the whole, this was not so depressing, Arthur thought.

The next man made a mistake and took him for an investor. He rose with great cordiality.

"Ah, good morning, sir—good morning! Have a chair. Just in? Do you feel the draft there? Oh, all right!" Then he settled himself in his swivel chair and beamed his warmest. "Well, what do you think of our charming town?"

Arthur had not the heart to undeceive him, and so, saturated in agony, crawled out at last, and went timidly on to the third man, who was kindly and interested in a way, and gave him the names of some ranchers likely to hire a hand. Two days passed in this sort of search and resulted in nothing materially valuable, but a strong quality came out in his nature.

Following these clues, Ramsey made long walks into the country, toiling from ranch to ranch over the dun-colored, lonely hills.

He was returning late one afternoon from one of these fruitless journeys. It was one of those strange days that come in all seasons at that altitude. The air was full of suspended mist—it did not rain, the road was almost dry under foot, and yet this all-pervasive moisture seemed soaking everything. It was a cloud, for this whole land was a mountain-top.

The road wound among shapeless buttes of red soil, the plain was clothed on its levels with a short, dry grass, and on the side of the buttes were scattering, scraggy cedars, looking at a distance like droves of cattle.

He sat down upon a little hummock to rest, for his feet ached with the long stretches of hilly road. The larks cried to him out of the mist, with their piercing sweet notes, cheerful and undaunted ever. There was a sudden lighting up of the day, as if the larks' song had shot the mist with silver light.

As he rose and started on with painful slowness, he heard the sound of horses' hoofs behind him, and a man in a yellow cart came out of the gray obscurity.

Arthur stepped aside to let him pass, but he could not help limping a little more markedly as the man looked at him. The man seemed to understand.

"Will you ride?" he asked.

Arthur glanced at him and nodded without speaking. The stranger was a fine-looking man, with a military cut of beard, getting gray. His face was ruddy and smiling.

"Thank you. I am rather tired," Arthur said, as he settled into the seat. "I guess I'll have to own up, I'm about played out."

"I thought you looked foot-sore. I'm enough of a Western man to feel mean when I pass a man on the road. A footman can get very tired on these stretches of ours."

"I've tramped about forty miles to-day, I guess. I'm trying to find some work to do," he added, in desperate confidence.

"Is that so? What kind of work?"

"Well, I wanted to get a place as foreman on a ranch."

"I'm afraid that's too much to expect."

Arthur sighed.

"Yes, I suppose it is. If I'd known as much two weeks ago as I do now, I wouldn't be here."

"Oh, don't get discouraged; there's plenty of work to do. I can give you something to do on my ranch."

"Well, I've come to the conclusion that there is nothing here for me but the place of a common hand, so if you can give me anything—"

"Oh, yes, I can give you something to do in my garden. Perhaps something better will open up later. Where are you staying?" he asked, as they neared town.

Arthur told him, and the man drove him down to his hotel.

"I'd like to have you call at my office tomorrow morning; my partner does most of the hiring. I've been living in Denver. Here's my card."

After he had driven away, the listening landlord broke forth:

"You're in luck, Cap. If you get a place with Major Thayer you're fixed."

"Who is he, anyhow?"

"Who is he? Why, he owns all the land up the creek, and banks all over Colorado."

"Is that so?"

Arthur was delighted. Of course, it was only a common-hand's place, but here was the vista he had looked for—here was the chance.

He stretched his legs under the table in huge content as he ate his supper. His youthful imagination had seized upon this slender wire of promise and was swiftly making it a hoop of diamonds.

When he entered the office next day, however, the Major merely nodded to him over the railing and said:

"Take a seat, please."

He seemed deeply engaged with a tall young man of about thirty-five years of age, with a rugged, smooth-shaven face. The young man spoke with a marked English accent, and there was a quality in his manner of speech which appealed very strongly to Arthur.

"Confound the fellow," he was saying, "I've discharged him. I cawn't re-engage him, ye know! We cawn't have a man abeout who gets drunk, y' kneow—it's bloody proveoking, Majah."

"But the poor fellow's family, Saulisbury."

"Oh, hang the fellow's family," laughed Saulisbury. "We are not a poor-house, y' know—or a house for inebriates. I confess I deon't mind these things as you do, old man. I'm a Britisher, y' kneow, and I haven't got intristed in your bloody radicalism, y' kneow. I'm in for Sam Saulisbury from the word go, as you fellows say."

"And you don't get along any better, Sam. I mean in a money way."

"I kneow, and that's too deuced queeah. Your blawsted sentimentality seems note to do you any harm. Still I put it in this way, y' kneow—if he weren't so deadly sentimental, what couldn't the fellow do, y' kneow?"

The Major laughed.

"Well, I can't turn Jackson off, even for you."

"Well, deon't do it then—only if he gets drunk againe and drops a match into the milk can, fancy! and blow us all up, deon't come back on me, that's all."

They both laughed at this, and the Major said:

"This is the young man I told you about, Mr.— a—"

"Ramsey is my name," said Arthur, rising.

"Mr. Ramsey, this is my partner, Mr. Saulisbury."

"Haow do," said Saulisbury, with a nod and a glance, which made Arthur hot with wrath, coming as it did after the talk he had heard. Saulisbury did not take the trouble to rise.

Arthur was not thick-skinned, and he had been struck for the first time by the lash of caste, and it raised a welt.

He choked with his rage and stood silent, while Saulisbury looked him over, and passed upon his good points, as if he were a horse. There was something in the lazy lift of his eyebrows which maddened Arthur.

"He looks a decent young fellow enough; I suppose he'll do to try," Saulisbury said at last, with cool indifference.

"By heaven, you won't!" Arthur burst out. "I wouldn't work for you at any price."

He turned on his heel and rushed out.

He heard the Major calling to him as he went down the stairs, but refused to turn back. The tears of impotent rage filled his eyes, his fists strained together, and the curses pushed slowly from his lips. He wished he had leaped upon his insulter where he sat—the smooth, smiling hound!

He was dizzy with rage. For the first time in his life he had been trampled upon, and could not, at least he had not, struck his assailant.

As he stood on the street corner thinking of these things and waiting for the mist of rage to pass from his eyes, he felt a hand on his arm, and turned to Major Thayer, standing by his side.

"Look here, Ramsey, you mustn't mind Sam. He's an infernal Englishman, and can't understand our way of meeting men. He didn't mean anything."

Arthur looked down at him silently, and there was a look in his eyes which went straight to the Major's heart.

"Come, Ramsey, I want to give you a place. Never mind this. You will really be working for me, anyhow."

Saulisbury himself came down the stairs and approached them, and Arthur perceived for the first time that his eyes were blue and very good-natured.

"I hope I haven't done anything unpardonable," he began, with his absent, rising inflection.

Arthur flared up again.

"I wouldn't work for a man like you if I starved. I'm not a dog. You'll find an American citizen won't knuckle down to you the way your English peasants do. If you think you can come out here in the West and treat men like dogs, you'll find yourself mighty mistaken, that's all!"

The men exchanged glances. This volcanic outburst amazed Saulisbury, but the Major enjoyed it. It was excellent schooling for his friend.

"Well, work for me, Mr. Ramsey. Sam knuckles down to me on most questions. I hope I know how to treat my men. I'm trying to live up to traditions, anyway."

"You'll admit it is a tradition," says Saulisbury, glad of a chance to sidle away. He cared nothing for the youth, but felt something was due his partner. The Major laughed.

"Now get into my cart, and we'll go out to the farm and look things over," he said; and Arthur clambered in.

"I can't blame you very much," the Major continued, after they were well settled. "I've been trying lately to get into harmonious relations with my employees, and I think I'm succeeding. I have a father and grandfather in shirt-sleeves to start from and to refer back to, but Saulisbury hasn't. He means well, but he can't always hold himself in. He means to be democratic, but his blood betrays him."

Arthur soon lost the keen edge of his grievance under the kindly chat of the Major.

The farm lay on either side of a small stream which ran among the buttes and green mesas of the foothills. Out to the left, the kingly peak looked benignantly across the lesser heights that thrust their ambitious heads in the light. Cattle were feeding among the smooth, straw-colored or sage-green hills. A cluster of farm buildings stood against an abrupt, cedar-splotched bluff, out of which a stream flowed and shortly fell into a large basin.

The irrigation ditch pleased and interested Arthur, for it was the finest piece of work he had yet seen. It ran around the edge of the valley, discharging at its gates streams of water like veins, which meshed the land, whereon men were working among young plants.

"I'll put you in charge of a team, I think," the Major said, after talking with the foreman, a big, red-haired man, who looked at Arthur with his head thrown back and one eye shut.

"Well, now you're safe," said the Major, as he got into his buggy, "so I'll leave you."

Arthur knew and liked the foreman's family at once. They were familiar types. At supper he told them of his plans, and how he came to be out there; and they came to feel a certain proprietorship in him at once.

"Well, I'm glad you've come," said Mrs. Richards, after their acquaintanceship had mellowed in a day or two. "You're like our own folks back in Illinois, and I can't make these foreigners seem neighbors nohow. Not but that they're good enough, but, land sakes! they don't jibe in some way."

Arthur winced a little at being classed in with her folks, and changed the subject.

One Sunday, a couple of weeks later, just as he was putting on his old clothes to go out to do his evening's chores, the Major and a merry party of visitors came driving into the yard. Arthur came out to the carriage, a little annoyed that these city people should not have come when he had on his Sunday clothes. The Major greeted him pleasantly.

"Good evening, Ramsey. Just hitch th horses, will you. I want to show the ladie about a little."

Arthur tied the horses to a post and cam back toward the Major, expecting him t introduce the ladies; but the Major did no and Mrs. Thayer did not wait for an intr duction, but said, with a peculiar, well-wor inflection:

"Ramsey, I wish you'd stand between m and the horses. I'm as afraid as death horses and cows."

The rest laughed in musical uproar, b Arthur flushed hotly. It was the tone En lish people, in plays and stories, used speaking to their butler or coachman.

He helped her down, however, with sullen air, for his rebellious heart seemed fill his throat.

The party moved ahead in a cloud laughter. The ladies were dainty as spri flowers in their light, outdoor dresses, a they seemed to light up the barnyard.

One of them made the most powerful i pression upon Arthur. She was so dain and so bird-like. Her dress was quaint, wi puffed sleeves, and bands and edges of lig green, like an April flower. Her narr face was as swift as light in its volati changes, and her little chin dipped occasio ally into the deep of her ruffled bosom lik swallow into the water. Every moveme she made was strange and sweet to see.

She cried out in admiration of everythi and clapped her slender hands like a wond ing child. The others seemed to laugh eve time they looked at her, she was so entir carried away by the strangeness of t farm.

She admired the cows and the colts ve much, but shivered prettily when the b thrust his yellow and black muzzle throu the little window of his cell.

"The horrid thing! Isn't he savage?"

"Not at all. He wants some meal, tha all," said the Major.

The young girl skipped and danced a shook her perfumed dress as a swallow wings. She was not vain; it was natural her.

Arthur looked at her with deep admi tion and delight, though Mrs. Saulisbu was talking to him.

He liked Mrs. Saulisbury at once, thou naturally prejudiced against her. She h evidently been a very handsome wom but some concealed pain had made her thin and drawn, and one corner of mouth was set in a slight fold as if touch of paralysis. Her profile was v beautiful, and her voice was that of a hig cultivated American.

She seemed to be interested in Arthur, she asked him a few questions, and all questions were intelligent.

Saulisbury amused himself by joking girl whom he called Edith.

"This is the cow that gives the cream know; and this one is the buttermilk co he said, as they stood looking in at the ba door.

Edith tipped her eager little face up him:

"Really?"

The rest laughed again.

"Which is the ice-cream cow?" the yo girl asked, to let them know that she not to be fooled with.

Saulisbury appealed to the Major.

"Majah, what have you done with ice-cream cow?"

"She went dry during the winter," the Major; "no demand on her. 'Su regulated by the demand,' you know."

They drifted on into the horse-barn.

"We're in Ramsey's domain now," the Major, looking at Arthur, who s with his hand on the hip of one of spotted gray horses.

Edith turned and saw Arthur for the time. A slight shock went through sensitive nature, as if some faint prop of great storms came to her in the wide gaze of his dark eyes.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, do you drive the horses?" she as quickly.

"Yes, for the present; I am the man," he said, in the wish to let her he was not a common hand.

Her eyes rested a moment longer o sturdy figure and his beautifully br skin, then she turned away.

After they had driven away Arthu ished his work in silence; he could h bring himself to speak to the horses mind was in such tumult.

He went up into his little room and down facing the glorious mountains, a sat there until the engulfing gloom of n night climbed to the glittering crow white soaring seven thousand feet a the twinkling light of the city. He di see the mountains; his eyes only t toward them as a cat faces the light hearth. It helped him to think, some

He was naturally keen, sensitive an pressionable; his mind worked quick he had read a great deal and held his ing at command.

His thought concerned itself first with the attitude these people ass toward him. It was perfectly evident they regarded him as a creature of in sort. He was their servant.

It made him turn hot to think how bly this contrasted with the flamb phraseology of his graduating oration

He came back for relief to the face girl, the girl who looked at him differ somehow.

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The impression she made on him was one of daintiness and light; her eager face and her sweet voice, almost childish in its thin quality, appealed to him with singular force.

She was strange to him, in accent and like; she was good and sweet, he felt sure of that, but she seemed so far away in her manner of thought. He wished he had been dressed a little better; his old hat troubled him especially.

The girls he had known, even the daintiest of them, could drive horses and were not afraid of cows. Their way of talking was generally direct and candid, or had those familiar inflections which were alien to him.

Was she a girl? Sometimes she seemed a woman—when her face sobered a moment—then again she seemed a child. It was this change of expression that bewildered and fascinated him.

Then her lips were so scarlet and her level brown eyebrows wavered about so beautifully. Sometimes one would arch, and the other remain quiet; this gave a wonderful look of brightness and roguishness to her face.

He came at last to the strangest thing of all; she had looked at him, every time he spoke, as if she were surprised at finding herself able to understand him.

He worked it all out at last. They all looked upon him as belonging to the American peasantry; he belonged to a lower world, —a world of service.

Saulisbury and Mrs. Thayer were perfectly frank about it; they spoke from the English standpoint. The Major and Mrs. Saulisbury had been touched by the Western spirit and were trying to be just to him, with more or less patronization.

As his thoughts ran on his fury came back, and he hammered and groaned and cursed as he tossed to and fro on his bed, determined to go back where the American ideas still held.

These spring days were days of growth to the young man. He grew older and more thoughtful, and seldom joked with the other men. He was attempting a beard also, and the men said jocosely:

"Art is living up to his whiskers."

There came to the surface moods which he had not known before. There came times when his teeth set together like the clutch of a wolf, as some elemental passion rose from the depths of his inherited nature.

His father had been a rather morose man, jealous of his rights, quick to anger, but just in his impulses. Arthur had inherited these stronger traits, but they had been covered up by the smiling exterior of youth.

Edith came up nearly every day with the Major in order to enjoy the air and beauty of the sunshine, and when she did not come near enough to nod to Arthur, life was a weary treadmill for the rest of the day, and the mountains became mere stacks of gloomy *débris*.

Sometimes she sat on the porch with the children, while Mrs. Richards, the foreman's wife, a hearty, talkative woman, plied her with milk and cookies.

"It must be heaven to live here and feed the chickens and cows," the young girl said one day when Arthur was passing by—quite accidentally.

Mrs. Richards took a seat, wiping her face on her apron.

"Wal, I don't know about that; when it comes to waiting and tendin' on a mess of em, it don't edgicate a feller much. Does it, Art?"

"We don't do it for play, exactly," he replied, taking a seat on the porch steps and smiling up at Edith. "I can't stand cows; I like horses, though. Of course, if I were foreman of the dairy, that would be another thing."

The flower-like girl looked down at him with a strange glance. Something rose in er heart that sobered her. She studied the lear brown of his face and the white of his orehead, where his hat shielded it from the un and the wind. The spread of his strong eck and the clutch of his brown hands ttracted her.

"How strong you look," she said, musngly.

He laughed up at her in frank pleasure.

"Well, I'm not out here for my health xactly, although when I came here I was retty tender. I was just out of college, in act," he said, glad of the chance to let her now that he was not an ignorant workingan.

She looked surprised and pleased.

"Oh, you're a college man. I have two rothers at Yale. One of them plays halfack or short-stop, or something. Of course ou played?"

"Baseball? Yes, I was pitcher for '88." e heaved a sigh. He could not think of ose blessed days without sorrow.

"Oh, I didn't mean baseball. I mean otball."

"We don't play that much in the West. e go in more for baseball. More science."

"Oh, I like football best, it's so lively. like to see them when they get all bunched p, they look so funny, and then when some llow gets the ball under his arms and goes ooting around, with the rest all jumping him. Oh, oh, it's exciting!"

She smiled, and her teeth shone from her arlet lips with a more familiar expression an he had seen on her face before. Some all of reserve had melted away, and they atted on with growing freedom.

"Well, Edith, are you ready?" asked the ajor, coming up.

Arthur sprang up as if he suddenly rembered that he was a workingman.

Edith rose also.

"Yes, all ready, uncle."

"Well, we'll be going in a minute. Mr. Ramsey, do you think that millet has got water enough?"

"For the present, yes. The ground is not so dry as it looks."

As they talked on about the farm, Mrs. Richards brought him out a glass of milk.

Arthur, with nice calculation, unhitched the horse and brought it around while the Major was detained.

"May I help you in, Miss Newell?"

She gave him her hand with a frank gesture, and the Major reached the cart just as she was taking the lines from Arthur.

"Are you coming?" she gayly cried. "If not, I'll drive home by myself."

"You mean you'd hold the lines."

"No, sir. I can drive if I have a chance."

"That's what the American girl is saying these days."

"Well, I'm going to begin right now and drive all the way home."

As they drove off she flashed a roguish glance back at Arthur—a smile which shadowed swiftly into a look which had a certain appeal in it. He was very handsome in his working-dress.

All the rest of the day that look was with him. He could not understand it, though her mood while seated upon the porch was perfectly comprehensible.

The following Sunday morning he saddled up one of the horses and went down to church. He reasoned she would attend the Episcopal service, and he had the pleasure of seeing her pass up the aisle most exquisitely dressed.

This feeling of pleasure was turned to sadness by sober second thought. Added to the prostration before his ideal was the feeling that she belonged to another world—a world of pleasure and wealth, a world without work or worry. This feeling was strengthened by the atmosphere of the beautiful little church, fragrant with flowers, delicately shadowed, tremulous with music.

He rode home in deep meditation. It was curious how subjective he was becoming. She had not seen him there, and his trip lacked so much of being a success. Life seemed hardly worth living as he took off his best suit and went out to feed the horses.

The men soon observed the regularity of these Sunday excursions, and the word was passed around that Arthur went down to see his girl, and they set themselves to find out who it was. They did not suspect that it was the Major's niece.

It was a keen and savage delight to see her, even at that distance. To get one look from her or to see her eyelashes fall over her brown eyes paid him for all his trouble, and yet it left him hungrier at heart than before.

Sometimes he got seated in suchwise that he could see the fine line of her cheek and chin. He noticed also her growing color. The free life she lived in the face of the mountain winds was doing her good.

Sometimes he went at night to the song service, and his rides home alone on the plain, with the shadowy mountains over there massed in the starlit sky, were most wonderful experiences.

As he rose and fell on his broncho's steady gallop, he took off his hat to let the wind stir his hair. Riding thus, exalted thus, one night he shaped a desperate resolution. He determined to call on her just as he would on a girl at Viroqua with whom he was on the same intimacy of footing.

He was as good as any class. He was not as good as she was, for he lacked her sweetness and purity of heart. And because she lived in a great house and wore beautiful garments did not shut him off from calling upon her.

CHAPTER III.

But week after week went by without his daring to make his resolution good. He determined many times to ask permission to call, but somehow he never did.

He seemed to see her rather less than at first; and, on her part, there was a change. She seemed to have lost her first eager and frank curiosity about him, and did not always smile now when she met him.

Then, again, he could not in working dress ask to call; it would seem so incongruous to stand before her to make such a request covered with perspiration and dust. It was hard to be dignified under such circumstances; he must be washed and dressed properly.

In the meantime, the men had discovered how matters stood, and some of them made very free with the whole situation. Two of them especially hated him.

These two men had drifted to the farm from the mines somewhere, and were rough, hard characters. They would have come to blows with him, only they knew something of the power lying coiled in his long arms.

One day he overheard one of the men speaking of Edith, and his tone stopped the blood in Arthur's heart. When he walked among the group of men his face was white and set.

"You take that back!" he said in a low voice. "You take that back, or I'll kill you right where you stand!"

"Do him up, Tim!" shouted the other ruffian; but Tim hesitated. "I'll do him, then," said the other man. "I owe him one myself."

He caught up a strip of board which was lying on the ground near, but one of the Norwegian workmen put his foot on it, and before he could command his weapon, Arthur brought a pail which he held in his right hand down upon his opponent's head.

The man fell as if dead, and the pail shattered into its original staves. Arthur turned then to face Tim, his hands doubled into mauls; but the other men interfered, and the encounter was over.

Arthur waited to see if the fallen man could rise, and then turned away reeling and breathless. For an hour after his hands shook so that he could not go on with his work.

At first he determined to go to Richards, the foreman, and demand the discharge of the two tramps, but as he thought of the explanation necessary, he gave it up as impossible.

He almost wept with shame and despair at thought of her name mixed in the tumult. He had meant to kill when he struck, and the nervous prostration which followed showed him how far he had gone. He had not had a fight since he was thirteen years of age, and now everything seemed lost.

He went to see the man just before going to supper, and found him in his barracks, sitting near a pail of cold water from which he was splashing his head at intervals.

He looked up as Arthur entered, but went on with his ministrations; after a pause he said:

"That was a terrible lick you gave me, young feller—brought the blood out of my ears."

"I meant to kill you," was Arthur's grim reply.

"I know you did. If that darned Norse hadn't put his foot on that board you'd be doing this." He lifted a handful of water to his swollen and aching head.

"What did you go to that board for? Why didn't you stand up like a man?"

"Because you were swinging that bucket."

"Oh, bosh! You were a coward as well as a blackguard."

The man looked up with a gleam in his eye.

"See here, young feller—if this head—"

Arthur's face darkened, and the man stopped short.

"Now listen, Dan Williams, I want to tell you something. I'm not going to report this. I'm going to let you stay here till you're well, and then I want this thing settled with Richards looking on; when I get through with you then you'll want a cot in some hospital."

The man's eyes sullenly fell, and Arthur turned toward the door. At the doorway he turned and a terrible look came into his face.

"And, more than that, if you say another word about—her, I'll brain you, sick or well!"

As he talked, the old, wild fury returned, and he came back and faced the wounded man.

"Now what do you propose to do?" he demanded, his hands clinching.

The other man looked at him, with a curious frown upon his face.

"I ain't a darned fool!" he curtly answered, and sopped his handkerchief in the water again.

The rage went out of Arthur's eyes, and he almost smiled, so much did that familiar phrase convey, with its subtle inflections. It was cunning and candid and chivalrous all at once. It acknowledged defeat and guilt and embodied a certain pride in the victor.

"Well, that settles that," said Arthur. "One thing more—I don't want you to say what made the row between us."

"All right, pard; only you'd better see Tim."

In spite of his care, the matter came to the ears of Richards, who laughed over it and told his wife, who stared blankly.

"Good land! When did it happen?"

"A couple of days ago."

"Wal, there! I thought there was a nigger in the fence. Dan had a head on him like a bushel basket. What was it about?"

"Something Tim said about Edith."

"I want to know! Wal, wal! An' here they've been going about as peaceful as two kittens ever since."

"Of course. They pitched in and settled it man fashion; they ain't a couple of women who go around sniffin' and spittin' at each other," said Richards, with brutal sarcasm. "As near as I can learn, Tim and Dan came at him to once."

"They're a nice pair of tramps!" said Mrs. Richards, indignantly. "I told you when they came they'd make trouble."

"I told you the cow'd eat up the grindstone," said Richards, walking away.

The more Mrs. Richards thought of it, the finer it all appeared to her. She was deeply engaged now on Arthur's side, and was very eager to do something to help on in his "sparking," as she called it. She seized the first opportunity to tell Edith.

"Don't s'pose you heard of the little fracas we had t'ther day," she began, in what she intended to be a delicately indirect way.

Edith was sitting in the cart, and Mrs. Richards stood at the wheel, with her apron shading her head.

"Why, no. What was it?"

"Mr. Ramsey come mighty near gettin' killed." She enjoyed deeply the dramatic pallor and distortion of the girl's face.

"Why—why—what do you mean?"

"Wal, if he hadn't a lammed one feller with a bucket he'd a been laid out sure. So Richards says; as it is, it's the other feller that has the head." She laughed to see the girl's face change.

"Then—Mr. Ramsey isn't hurt?"

"Not a scratch! The funny part of it is, they've been going around here for a week, quiet as you please. I wouldn't have known anything about it only for Richards."

"Oh, isn't it dreadful?" said the girl.

"Yes, 'tis!" the elder woman readily agreed: "but why don't you ask what it was all about?"

"Oh, I don't want to know anything more about it; it's too terrible."

Mrs. Richards was approaching the climax.

"It was all about you."

The girl could not realize what part she should have with a disgraceful row in the barnyard.

"Yes, these men—they're regular tramps; I told Richards so the first time I set eyes on 'em—they made a little free with your name, and Art he overheard them and he went for 'em, and they both came at him, two to one, and he lammed both out in a minute—so Richards says. Now I call that splendid; don't you? A young feller that'll stand up for his girl ag'in two big tramps—"

The Major had been motioning for Edith to drive on down toward the gate, and she seized the chance for escape. Her lips quivered with shame and anger. It seemed as if she had been splashed with mire.

"Oh, the vulgar creatures!" she said, in her throat, her teeth shut tight.

"There, isn't that a fine field?" asked the Major, as he pointed to the cabbages. "There is a chance for an American imitator of Monet—those purple-brown deeps and those gray-blue-pink pearl tints— What's the matter, my dear?" he broke off to ask. "Are you ill?"

"No, no, only let's go home," she said, the tears coming into her eyes.

He got in hastily.

"My dear, you are really ill. What's the matter? Has your old enemy the headache—" He put his arm about her tenderly.

"No, no! I'm sick of this place—I wish I'd never seen it! How could those dreadful men fight about me? It's horrible!"

The Major whistled.

"Oh, ho! that's got around to you, has it? I didn't know it until yesterday; I was hoping it wouldn't reach you at all. I wouldn't mind it, my dear. It's the shadow every lovely woman throws, no matter where she walks; it's only your shadow that has passed over the cesspool."

"But I can't even bear that; it seems like a part of me. What do you suppose they said of me?" she asked, in morbid curiosity.

"Now, now, dearest, to know that would be stepping into the muck after your shadow; the talk of such men is unimaginable to you."

"You don't mean Mr. Ramsey?"

"No, Mr. Ramsey is a different sort of man. Mr. Ramsey is fine and clean, and I don't suppose anything else would have brought him to blows with these men."

They sat looking straight forward.

"Oh, it's horrible, horrible!"

Her uncle tightened his arm about her.

"I suppose the knowledge of such lower deeps must come to you some day, but don't seek it now; I've told you all you ought to know. Ramsey meant well," he went on, after a silence, "but such things do little good, not enough to pay for the outlay of self-respect. He can't control their talk when he's out of hearing."

"But I supposed that if a woman was—good—I mean—I didn't know that men talked in that way about girls—like me. How could they?"

The abyss still fascinated her.

"My dear, these men are only half civilized. They have all the passions of animals, and all the vices of men. Ramsey was too hot-headed; their words do not count; they weren't worth whipping."

There was a little silence. They were nearing the mountains again, and both raised their eyes to the peaks deeply shadowed in Tyrian purple.

"I know how you feel, I think," the Major went on, "but the best thing to do is to forget it. To walk into a gang of rough men like that is foolish and dangerous too, for the ruffian is generally the best man physically, I'm sorry to say."

"It was brave, though, don't you think so?" she asked.

He looked at her quickly.

"Oh, yes; it was brave, and very youthful."

She smiled a little for the first time.

"I guess I like youth."

"In that case I'll have to promote him for it," he said, with a smile, that made her look away toward the mountains again.

CHAPTER IV.

Saulisbury took a sudden turn to friendliness, and defended the action when the Major related the story that night at the dinner-table, and they were seated over their walnuts and cigars. He was dining with the Saulisburys.

"It's uncommon plucky, that's what I think, d'ye kneow. By Jeove, I didn't think the young dog had it in him really. He did one fellow up with a bucket, they say, and met the other fellow with his left. Where did the young beggar get his science?"

"At college, I suppose."

"But I supposed these little Western colleges were a milk-and-wahta sawt of thing, ye kneow—Baptist and Christian Endeavor, and all that, ye kneow."

"Oh, no," laughed the Major. "They are not so benighted as that. They give a little attention to the elementary studies, though I believe that athletics do come second on the curriculum."

"Well, the young dog seems to have made

some use of his chawnce," said Saulisbury, who had dramatized the matter in his own way, and saw Ramsey doing the two men up in accordance with Queensbury rules, "I wouldn't hawf liked the jobe myself, do ye kneow. They're forty years apiece, and as hard as iron."

Mrs. Saulisbury looked up from her walnuts.

"Sam is ready to carry the olive club to Mr. Ramsey. 'The poor beggar,' as he has called him all along, will be a gentleman from this time forward."

After the Major had gone, Saulisbury said:

"There's one thing the Major was careful not to mention, my deah. Why should this young fellow be going about defending the good name of his niece? Do ye kneow, my dear, I fancy the young idiot is in love with her."

"Well, suppose he is?"

"But, my deah! In England, you kneow. it wouldn't mattah; it would be a case of hopeless devotion. But as I understand things heah, it may become awkward. Don't ye think so, love?"

"It depends upon the young man. Edith could do worse than marry a good, clean, wholesome fellow like that."

"Good gracious! You don't allow your mind to go that far?"

"Why, certainly! I'd much rather she'd marry a strong, young working-man than some burnt-out third-generation wreck of her own set in the city of Washington."

"But the fellow has no means."

"He has muscle and brains, and besides, she has something of her own."

Saulisbury filled his pipe slowly.

"Luckily it's all theory on our part; the contingency isn't hyah—isn't likely to arrive, in fact."

"Don't be too sure. If I can read a girl's heart in the lines of her face, she's got where principalities and powers are of small account."

"Really?"

"Sure as shooting," she smilingly said.

Saulisbury mused and puffed.

"In that case, we will have to turn in and give the fellow what you Americans call a boost."

"That's *right*," his wife replied slangily.

Edith went to her room that night with a mind whirling in dizzying circles, whose motion she could not check. It was terrible to have it all come in this way.

She knew Arthur cared for her—she had known it from the first—but with the happy indifference of youth, she had not looked forward to the end of the summer. The sure outcome of passion had kept itself somewhere in a golden glimmer on the lower sweep of the river.

She wished for some one to go to for advice. Mrs. Thayer, she knew, would exclaim in horror over the matter. The Major had hinted the course she would have to take, which was to show Arthur he had no connection with her life—if she could.

But deep in her heart she knew she could not do that.

Suddenly a thought came to her which made her flush till the dew of shame stood upon her forehead. He had never been to see her; she had always been to see him.

She knew that this was true. She did not attempt to conceal it from herself now. The charm of those rides with her uncle was the chance of seeing Arthur. The sweet, never-wearying charm that made this summer one of perfect happiness, that had made her almost forget her city ways and friends, that had made her brown and strong with the soil and wind, was the contact with the robust and clean and wholesome young man, a sturdy figure with brown throat and bare, strong arms.

She went off at this point into a retrospective journey along the pathways of her summer outing. At this place he stood at the wall, leaning upon his great gray horse. Here he was walking behind his plow; he was lifting his hat—the clear sunshine fell over his face. She saw again the splendid flex of his side and powerful thigh. Here he was in the hay-field, and she saw the fork-handle bend like a willow twig under his smiling effort, the muscles on his brown arms rolling like some perfect machinery. She idolized all he did, and the whole summer seemed filled with prismatic colors.

Then her self-accusations came back. She had gone down into the field to see him; perhaps the very man who was with him then was one of those whom he had punished. Her little hands clutched.

"I'll never go out there again! I'll never see him again—never!" she said, with her teeth shut tight.

Mrs. Thayer did not take any very great interest in the matter until Mrs. Saulisbury held a session with her. Then she sputtered in deep indignation.

"Why, how dare he make love to my niece? Why, the presumptuous thing! Why, the idea! He's a workingman!"

Mrs. Saulisbury remained quiet. She was the only person who could manage Mrs. Thayer.

"Yes, that's true. But he's a college-bred man, and—"

"College bred! These nasty, little Western colleges—what do they amount to? Why, he curries our horses."

Mrs. Saulisbury was amused.

"I know that is an enormity, but I heard the Major tell of currying horses once."

"That was in the army—anyhow, it doesn't matter. Edith can simply ignore the whole thing."

"I hope she can, but I doubt it very much."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Edith is interested in him."

"I don't believe it! Why, it is impossible! You're crazy, Jeannette!"

"He's very handsome in a way."

"He's red and big-jointed, and he's a mudsill."

Mrs. Thayer gasped, returning to her original charge.

Mrs. Saulisbury laughed, being malevolent enough to enjoy the whole situation.

"Well, I wouldn't try to do anything about it, Charlotte," she said. "You remember the fate of the Brookses, who tried to force Maud to give up her clerk. If this is a case of true love, you might as well surrender gracefully."

"But I can't do that. I'm responsible for her. I'll go right straight and ask her."

"Charlotte," Mrs. Saulisbury's voice rang with a stern note, "don't you *presume* to do such a thing. You will precipitate everything. The girl don't know her own mind, and if you go up there and attack this young man, you'll tip the whole dish over. Sit down now and be reasonable. Leave her alone for awhile. Let her think it over alone."

This good counsel prevailed, and the other woman settled into a calmer state.

"Well, it's a dreadful thing, anyhow."

"Perfectly dreadful! But you mustn't take a conventional view of it. You must remember, a good, clean and healthy man should come first as a husband, and this young man is clean and healthy, and I must admit he seems a gentleman, so far as I can see. Besides, you can't do anything by storming up to that poor girl. Let her alone for a few days."

Following this suggestion, no one alluded to the fight, or appeared to notice Edith's changed moods. But the younger woman could not forbear giving her an occasional squeeze of wordless sympathy, as she passed her.

It was pitiful to see the tumult and fear and responsibility of the world coming upon this dainty, simple-hearted girl. Life had been so straightforward before. No toil, no problems, no choosing one's things for oneself.

Meanwhile Arthur was longing to see Edith once more, and wondered why she had stopped coming.

The Major came up on Friday and Saturday, but came alone, and that left only the hope of seeing Edith at church, and the young fellow worked on with that to nerve his arm.

The family respected his departure on Sunday. They plainly felt his depression, and sympathized with it.

"Walk home with her. I would," said Mrs. Richards, as he went through the kitchen.

"So would I. Dang me if I'd stand off," Richards started to say, but Arthur did not stop to listen.

As he rode down to the city, he recovered, naturally, a little of his buoyancy. Sleep had rested his body and cleared his mind for action.

He sat in his usual place at the back of the church, and his heart throbbed painfully as he saw her moving up the aisle, a miracle of lace and coolness, and fragrant linen enveloping her fresh, young form, so erect and graceful and slender.

Then his heart bowed down before her, not because she was above him in a social class; he did not admit that, but because he was a lover, and she was his ideal. He was cast down as suddenly as he had been exalted by her failure to look cautiously around, as was her custom, in order to bow to him.

He stood at the door as they came out, though he felt foolish and boyish in doing so. She approached him with her eyes cast down; but as she passed him she flashed an appealing, mystical look at him, and flushing a radiant pink, slipped out of the side door.

It left him stunned and smarting for a moment. He mounted his horse and rode away toward the mountains, his thoughts busy with that strange look of hers. He came to understand and to believe at last what her first recoiling perception told him. She appealed to him and she trusted in him.

Then something strong and masterful rose in him. He lifted his big brown fist in the air in a resolution which was like that of Napoleon when he entered Russia. He turned and rode furiously back toward the town.

As he walked up the gravel path to the Thayer house it seemed like a castle to him. The great granite portico, the curving flight of steps, the splendor of the glass above the door, all impressed him with the terrible gulf between his fortune and hers.

He was met at the door by the girl from the table. He greeted her as his equal, and said:

"Is Miss Newell at home?"

The girl smiled with perfect knowledge and sympathy. She was on his side; and she knew, besides, how much it meant to have the hired man come in at the front door.

"Yes, she's at dinner. Won't you come in, Mr. Ramsey?"

He entered without further words, and followed her into the reception-room, which was the most splendid room he had ever seen. He stood with his feet upon a rug which was worth more than his year's pay.

"Just take a seat here, and I'll announce you," said the girl, who was almost trembling with eagerness to explode her torpedo of news.

"Don't disturb them. I'll wait."

But she had whisked out of the room. She had plans of her own; perhaps revenges of her own. Arthur listened. He could not help it. He heard the girl's clear, distinct voice; the open door conveyed every word to him.

"It's Mr. Ramsey, ma'am, to see Miss Newell."

The young man's strained ears heard the sudden pause in the click of knives and plates. He divined the gasps of astonishment which Mrs. Thayer's first words indicated.

"Well, I declare! Now, Major, you see what I told you?"

"The plucky young dog!" said Saulisbury, in sincere admiration.

Mrs. Thayer went on:

"Now, Mr. Thayer, this is the result of treating your servants as equals."

The Major laughed.

"My dear, you're a little precipitate. It may be a mistake. The young man may be here to tell me one of the colts is sick."

"You don't believe any such thing! You heard what the girl said—look at Edith!"

There was a sudden pushing and scraping of chairs. Arthur rose tense, terrified. There was a little flurry of voices.

"Here; give her some wine! The poor thing! No wonder—"

There was a slight pause.

"She's all right," said the Major. "Just a little surprised, that's all."

There was a little inarticulate murmur from the girl, and then another pause.

"By Jove! this is getting dramatic!" said Saulisbury.

"Be quiet, Sam," said his wife. "I won't have any of your scoffing. I'm glad there is some sincerity of emotion left in our city girls."

Mrs. Thayer broke in:

"Major, you go right out there and send that impudent creature away. It's disgraceful!"

Arthur turned cold and hard as granite. His heart rose with a murderous, slow swell. He held his breath, while the calm, amused voice of the Major replied:

"But, see here, my dear, it's none of my business. Mr. Ramsey has a perfect right to call—"

"H'yah, h'yah!" called Saulisbury, in a chuckle.

"I like him, and besides I rather imagine Edith has given him the right to call."

The anger died out of Arthur's heart, and the warm blood spouted once more through his tingling body. Tears came to his eyes, and he could have embraced his defender.

"Nothing like consistency, Majah," said Saulisbury.

"Sam, will you be quiet!"

The Major went on:

"I imagine the whole matter is for Edith to decide. It's really very simple. Let her send word to him that she does not care to see him, and he'll go away—no doubt of it."

"Why, of course," said Mrs. Thayer. "Edith, just tell Mary to say to Mr. What's-his-name—"

Again that creeping thrill came into the young man's hair. His world seemed balanced on a needle's point.

Then a chair was pushed back slowly. There was another little flurry. Again the blood poured over him like a splash of warm water, leaving him cold and wet.

"Edith!" called the astonished, startled voice of Mrs. Thayer. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to see him," said the girl's firm voice.

There was a soft clapping of two pairs of hands.

As she came through the portière, Edith walked like a princess. There was amazing resolution in her back-flung head. She wore the look of one who sets sail into unknown seas.

Some way—somehow, through a mist of light and a blur of sound, he met her—and the cling of her arms about his neck moved him to tears.

No word was uttered till the Major called from the doorway:

"Mr. Ramsey, Mrs. Thayer wants to know if you won't come and have some dinner."

THE END.

—The population of Venezuela by the last census was 2,550,000. This is more than Denmark's, and less than Switzerland's. It is about the same as that of Massachusetts. The last official estimate of the population of Massachusetts, made on January 1, 1894, was 2,472,000. By the Federal census of five years ago, the population of Massachusetts was 2,238,000.

When you buy
Sarsaparilla
ask for the best and you'll
Get Ayer's.
Ask for Ayer's and you'll get
The Best.

THE CZAR NICHOLAS.

BY SOPHIE FRIEDLAND.

I happened to be on a visit to the Unit
States at the time of the death of Cz
Alexander III., and I was perfectly struc
by the rumors that were then afloat as
the state and malady of the dying monar
his relations to his family, and principal
as to the succession of Grand-Duke Nichol
Where these rumors got their foundation
was hard to tell. Of one thing, however,
was sure, that they were very vexatious
me, who knew that under no circumstanc
could any one but the eldest son of t
Czar ascend the throne of the Romanoffs.
also knew that he was neither an idiot n
addicted to vices which would have ma
his ascension an impossibility. The forei
press had also married him to a Jewess—
rumor so ridiculous to those who were a
quainted with the Russian conditions th
it was worth no more than a smile of pi
for the people who believed in it.

Czar Nicholas has proved the fact th
he was the real heir to the throne of h
ancestors, but of his character very litt
was known, either in Russia or abroad.

Before he was sixteen years old he w
hardly ever spoken of. It was known th
he was a sickly boy, under the consta
charge of physicians, who, at one time, r
garded his state of health with great fe
but it was also known that his educati
was in the hands of a man who had t
reputation of being as high-minded a
noble as he was cultured and liberal-mind
and that his Imperial pupil had the deep
affection for him. Political circles spoke
General Danilovitz's dislike for the Ge
mans, but at the same time it was no secr
that the young Grand-Duke professed a
unbounded admiration for the German E
peror, a fact which seemed a warrant f
the future.

Some days ago I was asked whether
was acquainted with the plan after whi
our young Czar was educated. As I was no
I begged the favor of a copy of it for the ben
fit of my American friends, who, being on e
tremely good terms with us Russians, wou
surely be interested in the character
the man who has had it in his power
develop or ruin the natural good qualit
of the young prince in whose hands t
destiny of millions was one day to be plac

"An education according to the propos
plan," says General Danilovitz, "w
only have the desired result if nothi
in any case shall be allowed to bre
the arrangement which is established on
for all—if the persons and the times, a
everything which surrounds the Gra
Duke, shall be left without restriction
those people who will be intrusted by t
confidence of the Czar with the education
His Highness. If the Czar agrees with t
plan, he will be the first to submit to t
absolute execution of it." In mentioni
the lessons of his future pupil, Gene
Danilovitz says further: "During the l
sons, the door of the class-room should
inviolable to everybody, without excepti
Only then the Grand-Duke will learn
value his time when he sees that others
so and that the succession of the hours
study is kept with the strictest punctuali
During the course of his education, I
Highness must not be allowed to consi
anything more important than his duties;
these he must go on with a constant, stea
step, and an uninterrupted order of thing
the first condition for it. I venture to s
frankly that frequent changes from o
place to another seem to me greatly dis
vantageous to the occupations of the Gra
Duke; he must have but one place of r
dence for the winter and one for the summ
In the contrary case the order is interrupt
and we cannot answer for the progress
the studies. Changes of place will be
obstacle to the complete tranquility of
occupations; instead of the usual scho
room we shall have but stations, in wh
it will be impossible to have at ha
all objects necessary for instruction.
this will lead to a habit of incons
ency and to a constant desire for cha
two things which might prove danger
for the future. Even the preceptors wo
not be able to act as they would wish;
would be impossible for them to have
their disposal all things necessary for
preparation of the lectures, or all the bo
they need for their own occupations.

"This is no trifling matter; in a case l
this the professors and preceptors hav
be considered as much as their pupil. Ot
wise it would be useless to expect from th
more than they are able to fulfill, for w
the greatest desire to obey the wishes
His Majesty they will not be able to ans
for the result of their efforts. In order
follow the improvement in the course
studies, it will be absolutely necessary
institute monthly and six-monthly exa
inations. The monthly examination in
presence of the Empress, and the oth
(the one in June, the other in December
possible, in the presence of the Czar.

"On the study tables should lie a scho
book in which the teacher, at the end
every lesson, should inscribe the cond
and attention of his pupil.

"Here I take the liberty to add the foll
ing remark: The expressed approval of
Emperor should be the greatest reward for
son, and a sign of displeasure his severest p
ishment. We have to consider this as a g
matter in the education of His Highness

dare to hope that the Czar will never openly praise his son for application, but that he will simply show his content by a kind manner without any expression of satisfaction; such an expression should be saved for a few exceptional occasions only, for the rarer it will be given the more it will be appreciated, and the stronger the result. The Grand-Duke will grow accustomed to look upon the fulfillment of his duties as a simple necessity not deserving any reward, and his own character will grow stronger in the belief; every other good action is of little importance. Nothing but a lasting, constant goodness merits attention and praise. His Highness should learn to act without both: the thought of his father should be his secret encouragement, *his* approval should be his highest reward; and he should tremble before the thought of his father's displeasure. The Czar shall always be informed even of the smallest faults of his son, but let these remain a secret between His Majesty and the preceptors. Let the pupil feel his guilt and punish himself by the burden of his feelings. To have to undergo the evident anger of his father must remain the trial of his life. If it should ever have to come to this extreme, the remedy will be wholesome and the cure safe."

Here General Danilovitz adds a few words as to the presents that will be given out to his pupils.

"These," he says, "will have to correspond, by all means, with the general plan of education. If useless things shall be given to him, he will grow indifferent to such as are useful. Nothing should be given to the Grand-Duke which would be of no use to him at the present moment. If he receives things beforehand which he would only appreciate afterward, he will look upon them without much interest, and they will have lost their novelty for him when he will be able to understand them."

I wonder how Czar Alexander III. enjoyed the following passage, which he found in the programme:

"His Imperial Highness has not to become learned; he has to become enlightened. Instruction has to make him acquainted with all that is necessary for his own good and the good of his people. Instruction, in the deep sense of the word, is a far-reaching knowledge combined with morality. The enlightened, educated but immoral man is useless, because he employs his capacities badly. The moral but ignorant man is also of no good, because, with the best intentions, he has not the necessary means for action. Enlightenment unites knowledge with law. It is indispensable for the private man, for every one in his place has to know how to act. It is indispensable for a people, for an educated people will be more observant of the laws which comprise their morals and of the order which comprises their prosperity and safety. Enlightenment is, above all, indispensable for a ruler, for it gives him the power to govern well.

"The great treasure in the education of a monarch is history—in tracing the experiences of the past. It explains the present and foretells the future. History shows to a sovereign the needs of his country aud of his century. It has to be the main subject of study for the heir of a throne. History, hallowed by religion, will kindle in his heart a love for all that is great and noble, an aspiration for fame and esteem for humanity, and it will surely give him a deep understanding of his responsible position.

"From the science of history he will derive the principles necessary for a ruler. History makes the heir of a throne acquainted with the fate of nations: it explains to him their poverty and their welfare, and teaches him, above all, that his power is lent to him by God; to believe as believed Mark Aurel and Henry the Great. History says to him: 'Respect the law, and by your own example teach others to respect it.' A law broken by the Czar will not be respected by his people. Love and spread enlightenment. It is a strong support of a good reign. A people without education is a people without dignity. Ignorant slaves will be more liable to become furious rebels than enlightened subjects, who are able to appreciate the benefits of order and law. Respect public opinion; it is often the best adviser of a monarch, his most faithful assistant and the strictest executor of his will. Thoughts may grow rebellious when a government is oppressive and careless, but public opinion always sides with a just ruler.

"Love, liberty and justice all warrant the mercy of the Czar and the freedom of his people. Govern not by power, but by order; the fame of a monarch is not counted by the number of his wars, but by the prosperity of his people. Be true to your word; without confidence there is no esteem, and the unesteemed are powerless. Be surrounded by assistants worthy of you; blind self-love often banishes excellent people, and makes the monarch a victim to greedy slaves, the destroyers of his honor and the welfare of his subjects. Respect your people, then they will become worthy of respect. Love your people; they will return your love. Do not deceive yourself in regard to man or to anything earthly; keep in your heart the ideal of the beautiful—the faith of the benefactor; this faith is faith in God: it will guard your soul from the scorn of humanity, so perilous to the ruler of men."

This is a part of the programme which General Danilovitz laid before their Majesties, the parents of his pupil. I do not know whether it was changed in any way—I do not believe that it was. The Czar and Czarina desired that their son should become, above all, a good man. The Czarina admitted that a contact with politics at an early age was liable to harden the heart and suppress the human feelings. In the preceptor of their son she desired no Machiavelli, no Metternich, no Talleyrand, but a good, honest, educated man. General Danilovitz possessed these qualities, and has done his best to develop the good qualities of his pupil.

If little or nothing was known of the childhood of the heir to the Russian throne, it was owing to the solitary life he led in his father's palace of Gatchina. I have seen the apartments in which he passed his youth, and I have been amazed at the simple arrangement of his bedroom and his study. An iron bed, a hard mattress and a plain blanket, a few chairs and a table constituted the bedroom of the present Czar of Russia. He has grown up in the sweet atmosphere of an almost bourgeois household, in the enjoyment of a fond mother's care and surrounded by people chosen by a man like General Danilovitz. Some years ago, when he was travelling through Siberia, a friend of mine had the honor of offering him his steamboat and of conducting him to Tomsk. My friend, Mr. K., says: "I was very agreeably surprised to see so young a man with so much power of will and independence of spirit. Two Siberian gentlemen and myself had offered him each a steamer, but when the time for the river trip came there were but two—one for the Czarowitz and one for his suite, but where to put the servants we were at a loss. The Grand-Duke, after having, in a very decisive manner, stated his opinion of people who, like Mr. K., had first made an amiable offer and then backed out of it, took it upon himself to make the necessary arrangements. He invited all the older people to his steamer, giving General Danilovitz, who had not felt well during the tedious Siberian trip, his own state cabin, where he himself superintended his installation. He was the most charming host and interesting companion, inquired into everything concerning Siberia, expressed his horror at the life of the convicts and showed remarkable intelligence on every subject."

This was the first time I had heard something of Grand-Duke Nicholas. Of Czar Nicholas I hear often, a proof that he is more in contact with his people than his predecessor has been. We look forward with deep interest to new reforms.

◆

THE COLUMBIA CALENDAR.

A Highly Artistic Production for 1896—Bright Thoughts by Columbia Riders and Much Useful Information.

The Columbia Pad Calendar for 1896 has made its appearance, representing the eleventh annual issue, and handy and convenient as it has been heretofore, the new issue certainly surpasses any of its predecessors. The cycling fraternity, to say nothing of the general public, has acquired a decidedly friendly feeling for the Columbia Calendar, and its annual advent is looked forward to with interest and pleasure. The new Calendar contains a much better arrangement than in previous years, more space having been allowed for memoranda, while a greater charm has been added by liberal illustration and a unique and convenient grouping of dates, calculated to meet the hurried needs of business men. All these, however, merely form a setting for the bright and sparkling thoughts contributed by Columbia riders everywhere; for such a host of friends has the Calendar acquired that it has become a customary practice for wheelmen all over the country to jot down their best thoughts and inspirations after being subjected to the exhilarating influence of a Columbia ride, and to send them in to brighten its pages. In addition to these pleasing features, the moon's phases are indicated for the benefit of those who wish to know the best time for night riding. The many dainty sketches that embellish its pages render it, indeed, a work of art. Owing to the unusual demand last year, a much larger edition has been issued for 1896. The Calendar can be obtained for five 2-cent stamps by addressing the Calendar Department of the POPE MANUFACTURING COMPANY at Hartford, Conn. —*a.*

◆

DO YOU PLAY CARDS?

If so, send a two-cent stamp to the Indiana Bicycle Co., Indianapolis, Ind., who will mail free of charge their Souvenir Game Counter, as described in their advertisement. The Indiana Bicycle Co. are one of the largest Bicycle manufacturers in this country, and their "Waverley" machine is one of the most popular. —*a.*

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The attention of the lady readers of the *Ledger* is called to Mme. M. Yale's Guide to Beauty, which was advertised on page 19 of our Christmas issue, and is given away to all who write for it. Mme. M. Yale is a woman of peerless beauty and marvelous skill, celebrated the world over for her phenomenal success as a Beauty Specialist and Physical Culture Promoter. The Yale System has now taken the place of Delsarte, and is considered much farther advanced. Mme. Yale's offer to give away free her book on Beauty and Physical Culture is one that every lady in the land should take advantage of. Extracts from Mme. Yale's famous lectures, which she has delivered in all parts of the world, will be found in the Guide. Also six different pictures of the Queen of Beauty herself. Her pose as Trilby in one of these pictures will be found a gem in its delicate grace and classical perfection. Address Madame M. Yale, Temple of Beauty, 146 State Street, Chicago, Ill., mentioning the *Ledger*. —*a.*

◆

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There is one very essential feature in connection with these watches that the public may not fully appreciate, and that is that it is *the only company in the world that make and sell a watch complete*, thereby enabling them to guarantee every part of the watch, the case as well as time-keeping qualities of the movement. All other watch companies in the United States manufacture movements only. These are sold to jobbing houses and others, and by them are cased according to their needs and requirements. The unreliability of many of the so-called gold cases has led to a great deal of trouble and dissatisfaction from purchasers, and inasmuch as they are sold in such an indiscriminate way, no guarantees being given that can be relied on, the public are the sufferers.

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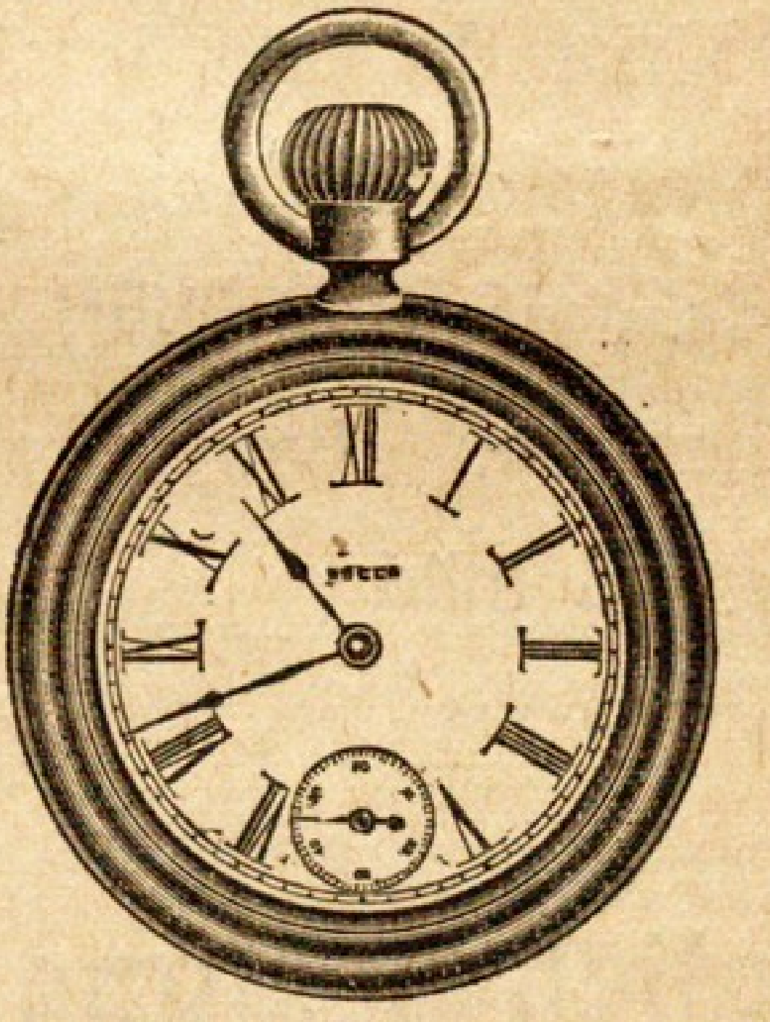

This watch is not a toy or sun-dial, but a serviceable timepiece, guaranteed by the manufacturer to be accurate and durable, which guarantee is assumed by us. It is a stem-winder and stem-setter, and comes in either a gilt or a nickel case, according to choice. It is sent securely packed, and in the box we place a serviceable chain. In the times of our grandfathers, such a watch, even if it could have been made, would have cost a considerable sum of money. This watch is not for sale, but is sent free, postpaid, as a gift to every boy and girl who sells the number of copies of the New York *Ledger* required by the above offer, namely, an average of 10 copies for 20 weeks, or an average of 20 copies for 10 weeks.

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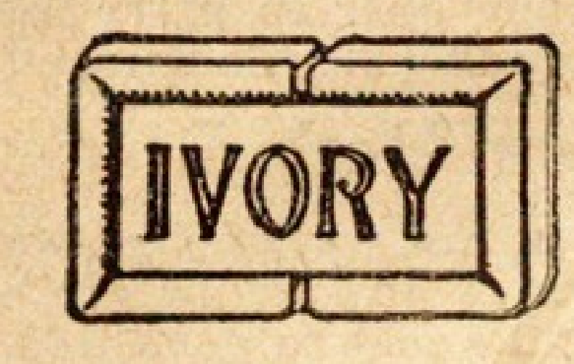

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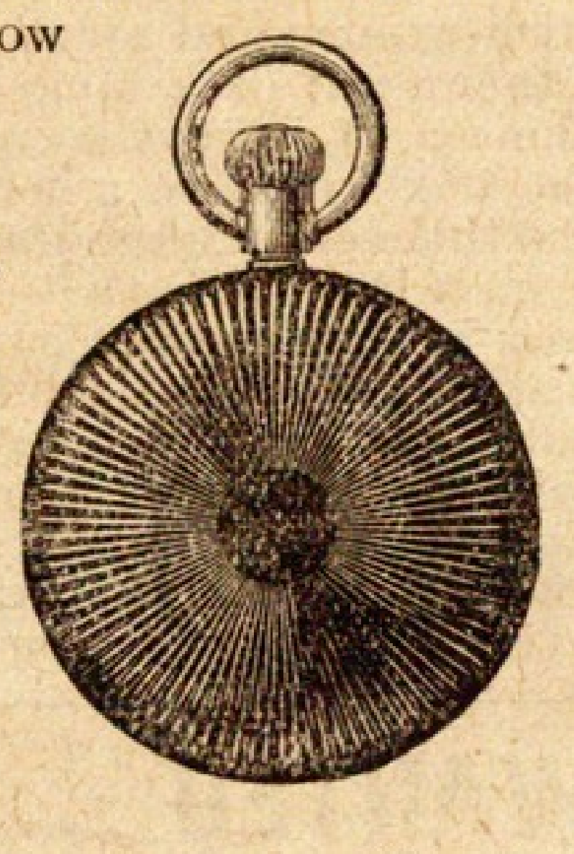

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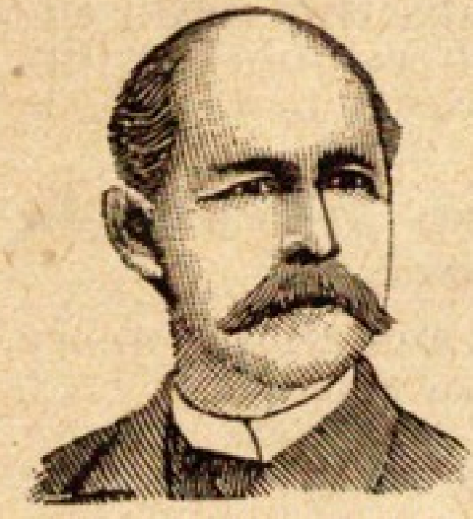

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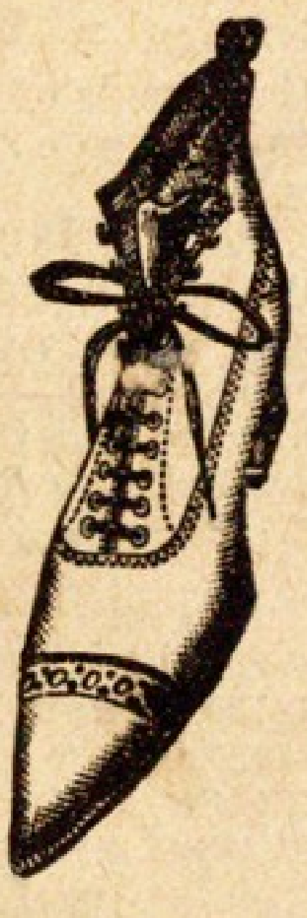

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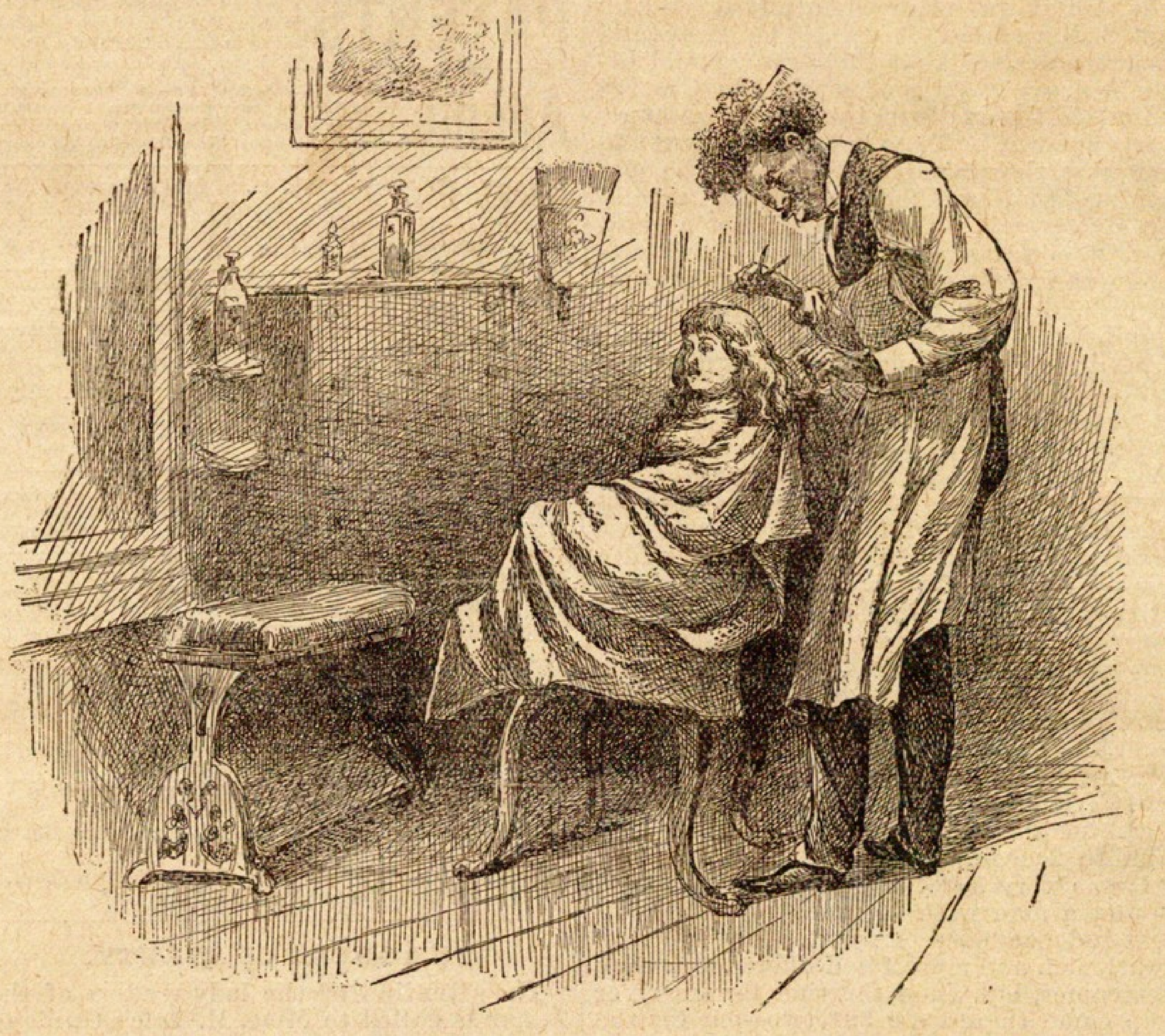

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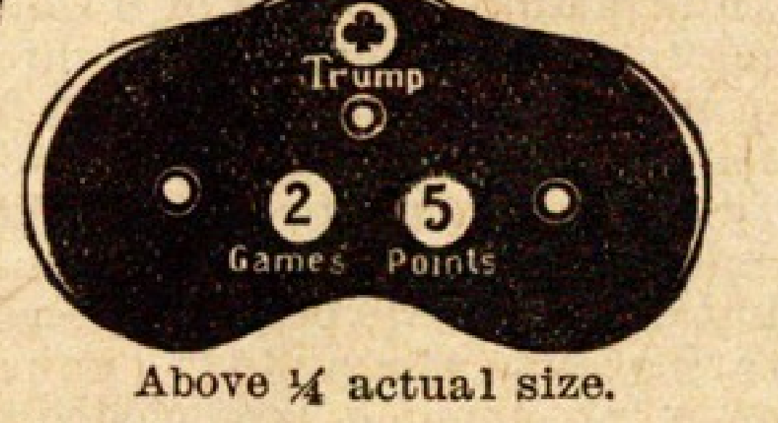

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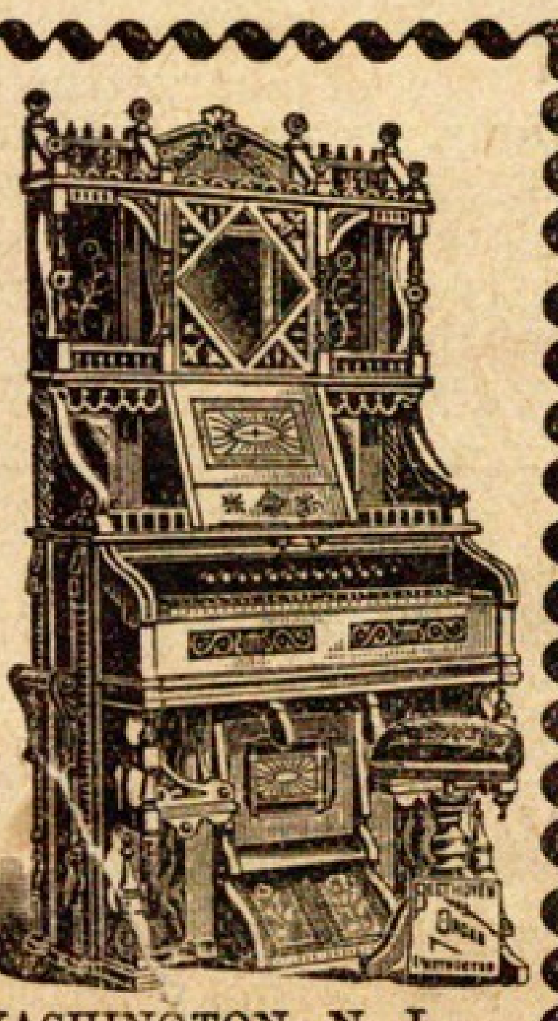

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1/24
Friday
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